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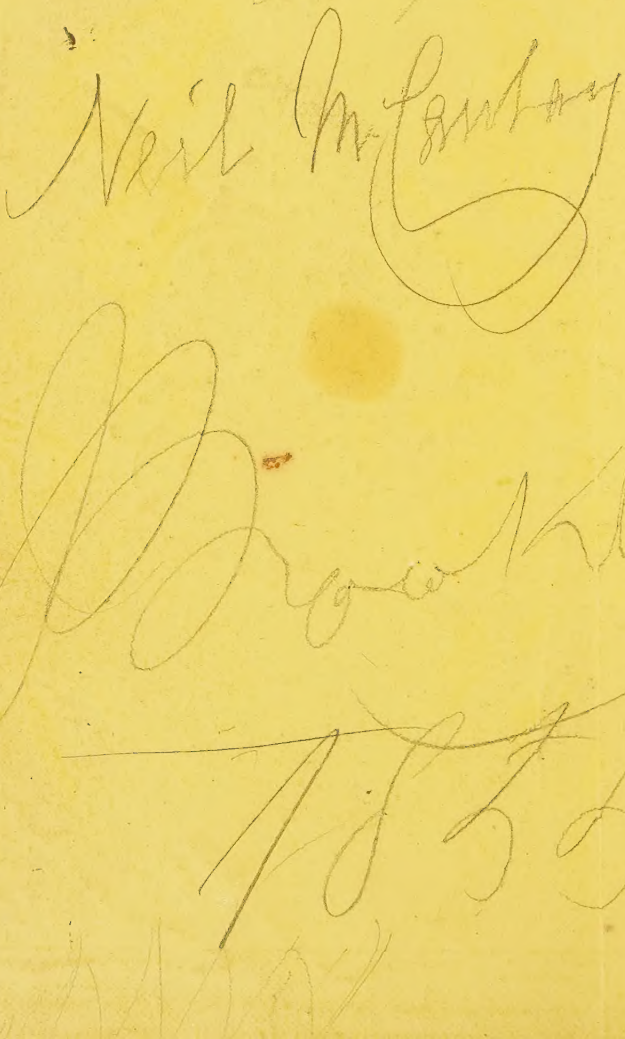
Neal McCarthy
Brooklyn 1859



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Neal McCauley's Book

Brooklyn 1846

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POVERTY,

AND

THE BARONET'S FAMILY;

A CATHOLIC NOVEL.

BY THE LATE HENRY DIGBY BESTE, ESQ.,

M.A., Fellow of St. Mary Magdalen College, Oxford; Originator of the religious opinions of

MODERN OXFORD.

"Pride, or prudery, or delicacy, or love of ease, keep one half of the world out of the way of observing what the other half suffer."—Paley.

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BIOGRAPHICAL MEMOIR

OF

THE AUTHOR.

THOSE who recollect the depressed state of the Catholic religion in England, and indeed in the greater part of Europe, at the time when Mr. Beste brought to it the sanction of his high reputation and acknowledged talents and judgment, will ever feel thankful for the support and comfort they derived from the testimony of so influential a convert. Though the cause of truth be secure, however it may be apparently depressed, yet ought we not to be unmindful of those whom God has raised up in the hour of need to testify to it. *We* rejoice in the extension of more just and liberal principles; even the fear of social obloquy need now scarcely present itself to the mind of the convert; yet let us not be unmindful of those who courageously braved the bigotry, the violence, and the penal persecutions which engendered that now lingering obloquy; of those who not only bore testimony to what *we* believe to be the truth, but whose conduct has established the principle so happily recognized by the greater part of civilized mankind—that each one has a right, without hinderance from the civil power, to worship his God in the manner most agreeable to his own conscience.

We are fortunate in being able to give, in his own words, an account of the early years of the honoured subject of this memoir, and of the course of events which, under God, led him to adopt those principles which, strange and new as they were in his time, have since become so prevalent in the University of Oxford and among the more learned of the Anglican clergy. His childhood is thus described in the account of his conversion to the Catholic faith, which he prefixed to his "Four Years in France :"—

"I was born on the 21st of October, 1768. My father was prebendary of the cathedral church of Lincoln, as his father had been before him. My grandfather's prebend was a very good, or, as they say, a very fat one; my father's prebend was but a lean one, but he had sense enough to be a doctor in divinity, whereas my grandfather had sense enough not to be a doctor in divinity. They both rest behind the high altar of the cathedral with their wives. * * * *

"My father's house, in which I was born, was so near the cathedral, that my grandmother, good woman! when confined to her chamber by illness, was wont, with her Anglican translation of the Bible, and Book of Common Prayer on the table before her, to go through the service along with the choir, by the help of the chant and of the organ, which she heard very plainly. From my earliest years, my mother took me regularly every Sunday to the cathedral service, in which there is some degree of pomp and solemnity. The table at the east end of the church is covered with a cloth of red velvet: on it are placed two large candlesticks, the candles in which are lighted at *even-song* from Martinmas to Candlemas, and the choir is illumined by a sufficient number of wax tapers. The litanies are not said by the minister in his desk, but

chanted in the middle of the choir, from what I have since learned to call a *prie-Dieu*. The prebendary in residence walks from his seat, preceded by beadles, and followed by a vicar or minor canon, and proceeds to the altar; the choir, during this sort of processional march, chanting the *Sanctus*. This being finished, and the prebendary arrived at the altar, he reads the first part of the Communion Service, including the Ten Commandments, with the humble responses of the choir; he then intones the Nicene Creed, during the music of which he returns to his seat with the same state as before. Here are *disjectæ membra ecclesiæ:* no wonder that the puritans of Charles the First's time called for a 'godly, thorough reformation.' At *even-song*, instead of the Antiphon to the Blessed Virgin, which is, of course, rejected, though the Magnificat is retained, with its astonishingly-fulfilled prophecy of the carpenter's wife, 'all generations shall call me blessed,' at vespers was sung an anthem, generally of the composition of Purcell, Aldrich, Arne, or of some of the composers of the best school of English music.

"Removed afterwards to St. Mary Magdalen College, Oxford, I found, in a smaller space, the same ceremonial; nay, the president even bowed to the altar on leaving the chapel, without any dread lest the picture of Christ bearing the Cross, by Ludovico Caracci, should convict him of idolatry. Here we all turned towards the altar during the recital of the Creed; at Lincoln this point of etiquette was rather disputed among the congregation: my mother always insisting on my complying with it; I learned to have a great respect for the altar. Whence this tendency of my mother's religious opinions or feeling was derived is now to be told.

"She was daughter of Kenelm Digby, Esq. of North

Luffenham, in the county of Rutland. A younger brother of this ancient family, in the reign of Edward IV. became the progenitor of this branch, which, illustrated by the names and the fame of Sir Everard and Sir Kenelm Digby, adhered to the religion of our forefathers down to the time of my maternal grandfather: he was the first Protestant of his family: he married a Protestant: he died while my mother was very young, but she was able to remember his leading her one day to the private burial vault, which had been, at the Reformation, consecrated for the use of the family in a retired part of the garden, and in which he was soon after deposited himself. His abjuration does not seem to have carried with it that of all his relations, at least not immediately or notoriously; for, on the approach of Prince Charles Edward, in 1745, when my mother was about twelve years old, the horses and arms of the family were provisionally taken from them, as being suspected papists: a precaution not unreasonable if their wishes were considered; for the children, as my mother told me, ran about the house, singing Jacobite songs, among which the following may vie, in poetical merit, though not in political effect, with the memorable Lilleburlero:

'As I was a walking through James's Park,
I met an old man in a turnip cart;
I took up a turnip and knocked him down,
And bid him surrender King James's crown.'

It is eighty years since: twenty years since the publication of Waverley. The cultivation of turnips, by which our agriculture has been so much improved, was introduced from Hanover.

"I am much inclined to doubt the fact of my grandfather's having renounced the *errors of popery:* his interment in the sepulchre of his ancestors, the suspicion attached to his family, as above stated, the advantage

from the supposition of the fact to those who wished to educate his children in Protestantism,—these are my reasons for doubting its truth. However this be, many Catholic families fell away from their religion after the battle of Culloden: at this time the whole Digby family was decidedly Protestant, excepting three respectable virgins, aunts of my grandfather; and my mother, under the care of an uncle, became, at the age of twenty-two, the meet and willing bride of a young Anglican divine.

"Nevertheless, some 'rags of popery' hung about her; she was very devout, and made long prayers: she had not her breviary indeed, but the psalms and chapters of the day served equally well: she doubted whether the gunpowder treason was a popish or a ministerial plot: the R. R. Dr. Milner had not yet written the dissertation, in his 'Letters to a Prebendary,' which proves that it was the latter. For want of this well-argued and convincing statement, I was called on to read, on the 5th of November, while squibs and crackers sounded in my ears, and Guy Faux suspended over the Castle Hill, was waiting his fate,—to read, I say, the life of Sir Everard Digby, in the 'Biographia Britannica,' where his character is treated with some kindness and respect. Sir Kenelm Digby is, of course, the next article in the 'Biography:' all this while I was detained from the dangerous explosions of the fire-works, which was in part my mother's purpose, though she had, no doubt, her gratification in the lecture.

"The youth of the present day are quite indifferent to the celebration of the 5th of November; they have not the grace to thank God for delivering them from 'the hellish malice of popish conspirators;' few of them even know that this delicate phrase is to be found in their Book of Common Prayer. But five and forty or fifty

years ago, before the repeal of the penal laws against Catholics, when not a chapel was permitted to them, but by connivance, those of Catholic ambassadors alone excepted; before the French Revolution had driven a Catholic priest into almost every town in England,—the case was widely different: let the riots of 1780 bespeak the common feeling of the people towards the religion of their forefathers. Here then, while they sung,

> 'O then the wicked papishes ungodly did conspire,
> To blow up king and parliament with gun-pow-dire,'—

I was taking a febrifuge draught, prepared by maternal caution and family pride.

"I went every day to learn Greek and Latin at the school founded for the use of the city out of the spoils of some monastery abolished at the time of Henry the Eighth's schism.* The sons of citizens are here taught gratis; others give a small honorarium to the master. The school was held in the very chapel of the old religious house: the windows looked into a place called the Friars or Freres, and over the east window stood, and still stands, the *cross,* 'la trionfante croce.' But this was not all. Opposite to the door of the school-yard lived three elderly ladies, Catholics, of small fortunes, who had united their incomes and dwelt here, not far from their chapel, in peace and piety. One of these ladies was Miss, or, as she chose to call herself, Mrs. Ravenscroft. Now my great grandfather, James Digby, had married a lady of that family: it followed therefore that my mother and Mrs. Ravenscroft were cousins. My father's house was about

* In "Personal and Literary Memorials" is a chapter describing these "Nine years at Lincoln School." It is a most touching and racy article,—full of the life of the school-boy and of the wisdom of the philosopher.

a third of a mile from the school: Mrs. Ravenscroft obtained leave for me, whenever it should rain between nine and ten in the morning, the hour at which the schoolboys went to breakfast, that I might call and take my bread and milk at her house. Some condition, I suppose, was made, that I should not be allowed to have tea: but they put sugar in my milk, and all the old ladies and their servants were very kind, and, as I observed, very cheerful; so that I was well pleased when it rained at nine o'clock.

"One day it chanced to rain all the morning, an occurrence so common in England, that I wonder it only happened once. I staid to dine with Mrs. Ravenscroft and the other ladies. It was a day of abstinence. My father, to do him justice as a true Protestant, 'an honest man who ate no fish,' had not accustomed me to days of abstinence; but, as I had had no play all the morning, I found the boiled eggs and hot cockles very satisfactory, as well as amusing by their novelty. The priest came in after dinner, and Mrs. Ravenscroft telling him that I was her little cousin, Master Beste, he spoke to me with great civility. At that time Catholic priests did not dare to risk making themselves known as such, by wearing black coats. Mr. Knight was dressed in a grave suit of snuff-colour, with a close neat wig of dark brown hair, a cocked hat, almost an equilateral triangle, worsted stockings, and little silver buckles. By this detail may be inferred the impression that was made on my mind and fancy. I believe I was the only Protestant lad in England, of my age, at that time, who had made an abstinence dinner, and shaken hands with a Jesuit.

"When the rain gave over, I returned home, and related to my father all the history of the day. This I did with so much apparent pleasure, that he said, in great

good-nature, 'These old women will make a papist of you, Harry.' He sent them occasionally presents of game in return for their attentions to me. * *

"Catholic gentry, every now and then, made visits to my mother; I suppose, for the sake of 'auld lang-syne.' Amongst these, Mr. and Mrs. Arundel, afterwards Lord and Lady Arundel, called on her so soon after the death of my father, that she could not go with them to the cathedral where he had been but lately interred. I accompanied them, and, on entering the south door, pointed out the pedestal on which, and the canopy under which stood, in Catholic times, an image of the Blessed Virgin, under whose invocation the church is dedicated.

"Comparing the behaviour of these gentry to my mother with the conduct of all of the same class, with three or four exceptions only, towards me,—I infer that the best way to be treated by them with common civility is, to be, not a convert, but a renegado.

"My father died while I was yet in the fourteenth year of my age: in less than three years after this event, when I was not quite sixteen years and a half old, I became a commoner of University College, Oxford; and, having kept there three terms, was nominated, at the election held immediately after the feast of the Patroness Saint, a Demy of St. Mary Magdalen College. I passed the long or summer vacations at my mother's house. During the second of these vacations, when rummaging among my father's books, I found, thrown aside among waste papers in a neglected closet, an old copy of the Rheims or Douay translation of the New Testament. The preface to this work is admirable, and might be read by managers of Bible Societies, if not to their advantage, at least to their confusion.

"By what chance the book came there, how long it

had lain there, whether my father had even ever known of its existence, I cannot tell. The notes are equal in bulk to the text: they attracted my attention, and I read them greedily.

"It will be observed, from the account given of my infancy, that I had been from the first familiarized with popery; that I had been brought up without any horror of it. This was much: but this was not all. I knew nothing of the doctrines of the Catholic church, but what I had learned from the lies in Guthrie's Geographical Grammar, and from the witticisms in the 'Tale of a Tub,' —a book, the whole argument of which may be refuted by a few dates added in the margin. My English reading had filled my head with the usual prejudices on these topics. Of popes I had conceived an idea that they were a succession of ferocious, insolent, and ambitious despots, always foaming with rage, and bellowing forth anathemas.

"I now perceived that there was some ground in Scripture for believing that St. Peter was superior to the other apostles ('Simon Peter, lovest thou me more than these?' 'A greater charge required a greater love,' argues one of the Fathers); and that, by the consent of all antiquity, the Bishops of Rome were the successors of St. Peter. Of other doctrines, I found rational, and what appeared to me plausible explanations. Transubstantiation was still a stumbling-block.

"I talked without reserve to my mother of my book, and of the impression it had made on me. She had no theological knowledge, but she had a great deal of religious feeling, and this feeling was all on the side of Catholicism. Had she consulted an able Catholic priest, perhaps had she consulted no one, I had at this time become a Catholic: she would have been well pleased with my conversion, and her own would have followed.

For her sake, as well as for many other reasons, I most sincerely regret that it did not at this time take place. Not that I doubt of the mercy of God towards innocent, involuntary error, but because, when we want to go to a place, it is better to be in the right road.

"She consulted my old schoolmaster, a wise and prudent man, as well acquainted with the question as the Anglican clergy in general are. As my mother was perfectly free from poperyphobia, she proposed the matter at once: 'Henry has been reading this book, and has a great mind to be a Catholic: you know all my family were Catholics.' My counsellor, without looking even at the outside of the book, put on a grave face—a tremendously grave face: 'I had rather give five hundred pounds than that such a thing should come to pass.' I well knew the value he set on five hundred pounds, and conceived an analogous idea of his repugnance. Nevertheless, I pressed the book on his notice. 'All this has been said a thousand times over;' meaning, and so I understood him, that it ought to have no more weight with me than with others; though the argument proved nothing but the usual obstinacy of those to whom arguments are addressed.

"My old master was too wise a man to argue even with a woman and a boy. 'What would the world think of such a step? What would your father say if he could come to life again? What will become of your education and future prospects?' My mother was alarmed at her own responsibility in the passive encouragement she had given. I was but seventeen years old. I did not, however, quite give up the point. 'These people have a great deal to say for themselves.'—'You think so? There's Christianity enough in the Church of England.' A few years later, I found he thought there was too much.

"I had subsequent conversations with him: I indirectly consulted others: I still read my book; but a book of notes has not the effect of a dissertation, well followed up, and leading to a conclusion. I found some insurmountable difficulties, and for the rest I said, 'Le roi s'avisera.' I had no other Catholic work, and no Catholic adviser. I went back to my college, where other studies occupied me; yet I may say, I never lost sight of the subject." * * * * *

At Oxford he resided with little intermission till the year 1797,* about fourteen years from the time when he had entered the university. Greatly does he appear to have enjoyed the literary leisure and congenial companions which this residence secured to him. And as a studious man, and an elegant scholar, he is even now well remembered. During this time he was presented by the president and fellows of his college with a very handsome copy of Plato, in three volumes, on the first page of which was inscribed, in the handwriting of the venerable Dr. Routh, the following testimonial:—

"Dno. BESTE,
in literis colendis, diligentia eximia et propitia Minerva uso, Presidens et Socii Collegii B. M. Magdalenæ, Oxon: ne amor tali alumno debitus teste omnino careat, hoc munusculum D.D. 14mo. die Julii, anno salutis 1789."

"There are two methods of defending the reformed Church of England; one by asserting the right of private judgment; * * * the other by admitting that the Church of Rome, as the Anglicans call it, has been and is a true Church, teaching with authority all

* His father had been educated at Cambridge; and had stood, in his time, as senior wrangler in that University.

doctrines necessary to salvation; that the Church of England, having purified itself from errors and abuses, is also a true Church, an integral portion of the Catholic or universal Church, with all the authority to such a body ecclesiastical of due right appertaining. Such are the two modes of defending England's Reformation adopted by the low and the high church parties, which, once declaredly and still insensibly, divide its clergy. * * * I was induced to embrace, and, for a time, conscientiously embraced, the opinions of a high churchman; and I was induced to this by the arguments and example of my friend, Richard Paget. * * *

"We used to sit together, hour after hour, *cozing*. He would take up scraps of paper and draw admirable caricature likenesses of the members of the college, not sparing the person before him; and then a stroll round the walks; and then, as we passed by my rooms on our return, 'come in again,' and so, another hour's coze. Soon after the commencement of our acquaintance, he began the studies which he thought requisite as a preparation for being ordained a minister of the Church of England. I had the result of these studies, which he pursued according to his own taste, for there is or was no rule in this matter: great admiration of the character of Archbishop Laud; lamentation of the want of splendour and ceremonial in the Anglican service; blame of those clergy who allowed church authority to slip from their hands, lowering themselves into teachers of mere morality. He gave himself very little trouble about the opinions of the dissenters, condemning them all in a lump, by a sort of ecclesiastical and political anathema; but he took great pains to convince himself that the Church of England was in the right in its polemical dispute with the Church of Rome. He was willing to allow to the bishop

of that city a préséance above all other bishops, not merely on account of the former imperial dignity of that city, but also on account of his succession to St. Peter, who had the same precedence among the apostles, though the privileges of the apostles were equal, as those of bishops ought to be. He saved the indefectibility of the Church, by declaring that the Church of Rome was a true Church, though not a pure Church; that papists might be saved, since what they believed amiss did not destroy the effect of what they believed aright. He affirmed, that the separation of the Church of England from the Church of Rome was the Pope's fault; that England had not separated from Rome, but had exercised its right of reforming errors in faith, and abuses in discipline, and approaching nearer to the primitive model; that the Pope, in excommunicating England for having done thus, had in fact excommunicated himself. On several points he shewed the practice of Rome to be right; on others, to regard things indifferent.

"Many other matters relating to this subject were discussed in our conversations, occasionally resumed during the continuance of my friend's residence in college. He was ordained deacon, and some two years after died.

"In the year 1791 I took my Master of Arts' degree in Act term, that is, in the beginning of summer, and went to Lincoln to pass some time with my mother, before I should put into execution a project which I had long meditated of a journey to France and Italy. Between my Bachelor's and Master's degrees, as I had no excuse for non-residence in college, I had been obliged to reside: indeed I was sufficiently fond of the literary leisure which this mode of life secured to me. I had always considered myself as destined to Anglican orders; it was

the profession which my father had chosen for me, and I had, in some sort, prepared for it: I had confirmed myself in high church principles, and read a little Hebrew; but I had also studied the French and Italian languages for the use and service of my foreign travels. * * * But how could any one propose to himself to pass any length of time on the continent, agitated, as it now was, by the beginnings of the French revolution?

* * * * *

"I waited. During this time a violent inflammation in my eyes (a complaint to which I had been often subject, and which will, I fear, in its consequences, finally deprive me of sight) confined me to the house, and prevented me from reading for some weeks. Deprived of the use of books, at all times my chief employment and consolation, and compelled to occupy myself with my own thoughts, I passed in review the topics by which men are usually induced to devote themselves to the more immediate service of God. My education, whatever may have been its influence on my virtue, had been regular, monkish even, if any one please to call it so: the feeling of piety had never been entirely renounced by me; and I now easily brought myself to entertain the hope that, by entering into the ecclesiastical state, I might be of some use to the cause of religion. The first day that my eyesight was restored to me, I wrote to the president of Magdalen College, then bishop of Norwich, requesting to be admitted as a candidate for deacon's orders at the next ordination in September.

"The same motives which influenced me to this step, induced me also, three months afterwards, to take the curacy of a large parish in Lincoln; to engage, that is, to do the duties of him *qui curat*, as far as my inferior degree of deacon permitted. The stipend, about one-fifth of the wages of an able mechanic, was known to be no

object with me: I had an income more than sufficient for my wants as a single man, and, besides, lived in the house of my mother. As usual, in similar cases, some applauded my zeal, while others laughed at it.

"Within a few months, a fellowship became vacant on my county. I went up to college to pronounce my probationary oration. In this discourse, enumerating the former worthies of the house, I commended our predecessors at the time of the Reformation for having been of the number of those who did not wish that Reformation to be excessive—*nimia* was the word; and of those who did not think, 'the further from Rome, the nearer to truth.' The orator, on this occasion, is introduced between the first and second course of the grand dinner of the 22nd of July; his voice may be clear as his stomach is empty: his task completed, he is placed at the right hand of him who presides at the 'strangers' table,' ranged down the middle of the hall, and is served with the first slice of the haunch of venison. I took the place reserved for me: and not perceiving that my high church sentiments had displeased any of my auditors, found the second course of a public dinner, under such glorious circumstances, an ample amends for being excluded from the first.

"I was so much pleased with a college life, that I determined to return to my abode in college, on my admission as *actual* fellow. I thought I had done enough to testify my devotion to the Church by one year's volunteer service of the parish of St. Martin; for volunteer it was in the spirit, and almost in the letter. 'Let all those who look for high preferment in the church, do as much,' said I." * * * * *

And high preferment in the church appears, notwithstanding his pious resolves, to have been his ambition: for about this time he sold the advowson of an old (and

now very valuable) family living, on the estate of which his family were lords of the manor, lest he should be represented "at head quarters" as already provided for.

"In November following," he continues, "I preached before the university, at St. Mary's church, a sermon on the text, 'Whosesoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosesoever sins ye retain, they are retained.' I asserted, that the power of absolving from sin neither had been, nor could have been, abandoned by our reformers; defended the power against all impugners and repugners; and indicated the evil consequences resulting from allowing it lie in abeyance. After some declamation respecting the horrors then perpetrated in a neighbouring nation, and some fears respecting the removal of our candlestick, I concluded by trusting, that all whom it might concern would acquit themselves as faithful stewards of the mysteries of God. The leading members of the university were prodigal in praise of this discourse. One of them, afterwards a bishop, preached the Sunday following at St. Mary's, to assure the university that I was in the right; a confirmation which, considering my youth and inexperience, he justly deemed by no means superfluous. Another, whom I should be proud to name were there no indiscretion in doing so, bought the sermon when published; a compliment which, my printer told me, he had not paid to those published for many years past. He might do this, it may be said, as finding the sermon supremely ridiculous; but this supposition is negatived by the gracious manner in which, from this time, though I had not yet the honour of his acquaintance, he always saluted me in passing; his high station and character permitted to him this mode of signifying his approbation to one unknown, and rendered it peculiarly gratifying to me.

"Some, however, cried out 'flat popery;' but the words in which the priest is directed to give absolution in the 'Order for the Visitation of the Sick,' are so precise; the assertion of the right in all cases is here so formal (for it is not supposed that a physician is to be sent for to determine whether the penitent patient is sick enough to be absolved); the practice, in respect to penance, of those early ages to which the Church of England appeals, is so well known;—that the cry of 'flat popery' could not be sustained. Indeed, the sermon bears on the face of it some very outrageous abuse of the Romish Church; but this abuse is so much a matter of course, that it would hardly have served as a justification, had one been wanted. I professed myself contented to be as popish as the Church of England.

"One of the heads of the university said to me: 'The doctrine of your excellent discourse is clearly the doctrine of the Church of England: she asserts the right of absolution to be inherent in her clergy, but the people will not submit to the exercise of the power.' This is true; it is true also, that the clergy very prudently abstain, in general, from sounding the inclinations of the people on the subject. My attempt must rather be considered, from the place in which the discourse was delivered, as a sort of *concio ad clerum*.

"I have heard of one clergyman who made the attempt; he preached to his people of the power belonging to him, as a priest, of absolving them from their sins, and of the benefit which they would derive, if truly penitent, from confession and absolution; concluding by fixing a time, at which he would be at home, to hear all those who should have any communications to make to him with such intention. This discourse caused a mighty hubbub in the parish; people did not know what to make of it;

some doubted if their clergyman could seriously mean what he had said: one old woman did not hesitate to declare 'she would see him d——d if she would tell him all she knew.' The confusion ceased in due time; but the people neglected to avail themselves of the offer of their pastor." * * * * *

This was written in 1826. Since its publication, several of the Anglican clergy have made the same attempt, and with scarce better success.

Five and thirty years afterwards, this sermon was republished by the author in his "Personal and Literary Memorials," with notes, in which he discussed, as a Catholic, the assertions he had made in it. "The sermon is," he there says, "worthy of a place among literary memorials: a most curious one it is: a notable compound of *bonne foi* and *bonhomie*, of sincerity and simplicity, of pious zeal and arrogant presumption. Not for a hundred years before had any Anglican congregation heard any thing so strange! Yet so conformable is it to the Anglican theory, that it was applauded by all the university of Oxford, except the Indifferents; who, though the more numerous, were not the more respectable party." * * * * *

"I could have mentioned other high authorities that took part with me. The Reviews said that ground was laid for an important controversy: the Dissenters said, that if the Church of England had renounced popery, it had got something that would do as well. But all apprehension subsided in consideration of the acknowledged impossibility of bringing the good people of England on their knees, after more than two centuries of sturdy resistance to confession. My conversion to the Catholic faith, four years and a half afterwards, rendered the sermon worse than useless to the cause of Anglican abso-

lution. Had I been, *decursu honorum*, a dean or a bishop, it would not have been so readily forgotten."

More recent events at Oxford have given us cause to believe that the sermon was not so entirely forgotten as the writer of it afterwards fancied. It is more than probable that the doctrines inculcated by him had lived in the mind of the university, maintained by the sympathy of the more pious and learned of its members, and prompting and suggesting that larger development with which they have been put forth in our times.

"I had formerly," says Mr. Beste in the same account of his conversion, "I had formerly been scandalized by the non-observance of days of fasting and abstinence by the Church of England: I once got myself laughed at by talking about it. Example and roast beef are powerful persuaders, and I continued to do as others did."

* * * * *

"If I were conscious of any insincerity in my adherence to the Church of England, during this period, I would now declare it; I hold myself bound to tell the truth, and not intentionally to lead the reader into any misapprehension. I had certainly committed a great fault in not prosecuting the inquiry begun by the reading of the Rheims Translation of the New Testament: it was the fault of my boyhood,—a fault of which, on human grounds even, I have but too much cause to repent. By not bringing the inquiry, at that time, to the point to which I afterwards brought it, I lost twelve years of my life, dating from seventeen years old,—a time which might have been employed in diverting my education to other purposes, in adopting and following another profession, and in forming other connections and friendships, than those which I have, of course, forfeited by my conversion. But, during these twelve years, excepting the

last year only, in which year I was not in the receipt of any ecclesiastical or academical profits, and which was passed in doubt and research, I firmly believed that 'the Church of Rome had erred, not only in matters of discipline, but also in matters of faith.'* Transubstantiation was the great stumbling-block; and a church which had erred in so grave a matter, was not a teacher to be implicitly confided in. I thought Catholics were, not intentionally, but in fact, guilty of idolatry; and I thought the sin pardonable in them on account of the intention. Having once set myself at liberty to reject the authority of the Church in communion with the bishop of Rome, I followed, among the various interpretations of which Scripture is capable, that given by the Church of England, judging it to be the most reasonable. Not sufficiently instructed in the distinction between matters of faith and questions of discipline, I believed the differences and points in dispute between these two portions of the Catholic Church to be more numerous than they really are.

"Archimedes said, 'Give me where to stand, and I will move the earth.' At Oxford I was on the peculiar ground, the *terra firma*, if firm it be, of the Church of England: there I could not move or weigh it, or see it at a due distance, to judge of its form or proportion. Indifference was hardly to be obtained amidst so many sympathies." * * * * *

"I have made my apology to the Church of England for having quitted it: to be convinced that it is my duty to return to it, I require only *a definition of the word* CHURCH, *and a definition of the word* HERESY—*two defi-*

* In justice to Mr. Beste, we must call attention to this sentence. If he orginated the feelings of the present Oxford school, he did not orginate its practice.

nitions: one will not suffice: for it is easy to define CHURCH *so that there can be no* HERESY, *and* HERESY *so that there can be no* CHURCH. *A Christian separated from Catholic unity may define one of these two words, if he is not to be called on to define the other: but I am at a loss to perceive how he can define them both without self-condemnation. Let him make the trial. The words are found, both of them, in the Anglican vocabulary: they ought to have a definite and appropriate meaning.*" * * *

Such is the "challenge" alluded to in the following novel, as having been given by one of the characters in the story. We extract it from the notes appended to the sermon on priestly absolution when he republished it, as before stated.

"Soon after my sermon on absolution, I preached in the same church as before, to a congregation composed as before, a discourse in which I detailed the evils of pluralities. This discourse," Mr. Beste quaintly adds, "was not heard with the same approbation as the former."

* * * * *

"I was sitting," said a friend to us, "in his rooms one evening at ten o'clock, and was most surprised to hear that he had not written one word of the sermon that was to be delivered on the following morning. I left him immediately, telling him he had no time to lose in preparing himself. On the next morning, he preached a discourse which shewed no other mark of hasty composition save that it was written on loose scraps of paper which strewed the cushion before him." This evinces his facility in composition. Yet though his subjects were so chosen as to call for unusual attention, he never preached more than five or six times while at Oxford.

In "Bibliotheca Parriana" occurs the following note, by Dr. Parr, on the sermon on priestly absolution:—"Mr.

Beste was a very good scholar: he became conscientiously a member of the Church of Rome, and honourably resigned his fellowship of Magdalen College, Oxford." In his own quiet sub-acid style, Mr. Beste has, in his "Personal and Literary Memorials," noticed these remarks of Dr. Parr. The learned doctor misstated the cause of Mr. Beste's resignation of his fellowship: he did so on his succession to a freehold estate which devolved to him on the death of his mother, in 1797, and the possession of which was incompatible with the tenure of his fellowship. On the occurrence of this event, he quitted Oxford, sent his books to Lincoln, and established himself there in a manner very much in accordance with his former collegiate habits.

Here he fell in with the celebrated Dr. Paley, of whom he has given such a curious and animated account: and here, while preparing himself to convert the Jews by a Bampton lecture to be delivered by him at Oxford, he became acquainted with a French emigrant priest, who, by starting a few chronological questions, put him upon that course of inquiry which ended in his conversion to the Catholic faith.

"Of the four marks of the Church," he says, "set down in the Nicene Creed, 'one, holy, Catholic, apostolic,'—the first mark is exclusive and indisputable. Any Church may say of itself that it is 'holy,' and every good Christian will wish that it may be so. The Church of England calls itself 'apostolic,' because, as it affirms, its doctrine is apostolical; it also calls itself 'Catholic,' or a portion of the Catholic Church: but then it is apostolical in one sense, and Catholic in another; apostolical by doctrine, and Catholic by unity: then has the Catholic Church failed, since its doctrine was lost for so many ages: then may there be union without communion.

"It is curious to observe with what facility the English Church can distinguish between itself and the Catholic in a question of persecution or civil exclusion, and how readily its portion of catholicity, when pressed by the argument of unity, is re-asserted and resumed.

"A Protestant Anglican friend said to me, one day, 'We are all Catholics; you are a Roman Catholic, and I am—.' He hesitated. 'What?' said I; 'an English Catholic?'

"No Christian community, separated from the Church, can claim to be the Church; the date of its separation precludes the claim. 'Prior venio,' says Tertullian. Neither can it be a portion of the Church; community in things sacred being essential to unity. A mark is also given by Christ himself, by which his one Church may be known: 'Thou art Peter, and on this rock I will build my Church.' All antiquity has recognized the Pope of Rome as successor of Peter.

"Having obtained this view of the subject, from reading several works of the Fathers, I gave up the absurd notion of a true Church teaching a false doctrine, and only wondered how I could have retained it so long. A Church is essentially a teaching society, and, if it teach falsely, it has failed in the very end and purpose of its existence. * * * * *

"In this disposition of mind, not much road remained for me to travel, and I followed, henceforward, the guidance of the Church; studying for instruction, not for dispute; to remove prejudices, and correct misapprehension." * * * * *

On the arguments which induced Mr. Beste to return to the faith of his forefathers, we are not called upon to enter in this place. He was received into the Church on the 26th of May, 1798. To his contemporaries of all

parties, he proved himself, at all events, an honest man, and a morally courageous man. No one, from birth, from character, and from literary acquirements, had higher expectations than were justly his in the profession which he abandoned: no one could have taken the step which he conscientiously took, at a more unpropitious moment. The penal laws were, indeed, repealed; but having received deacon's orders in the Established Church, he exposed himself to a *premunire* with which he was, for a time, seriously threatened. Nor must be forgotten the sacrifice of old ties and feelings, and the social obloquy, at that time so violent, to which he exposed himself. His enemies, if he had any even of the Establishment, must have given him credit as *an honest man*. But of the liberal conduct of the Anglican clergy towards him personally, he always speaks with kindly and grateful feelings.

Three years afterwards, he married a daughter of Edward Sealy, Esq. of Nether Stowey, and appears thenceforward to have been chiefly engrossed by domestic pursuits, and the education of a large family. Much of his time was spent in Bath and on one of his estates in Lincolnshire, of which he undertook the management, and where he indulged in a new-born love of agriculture. Literature was, by no means, abandoned: but though he did not write much, some of our readers may recollect the articles which, from time to time, appeared in the periodical publications of the day, and in which, under the signature of "An English Catholic," he most nervously lent his aid to the support of his religion and to the acquisition of their political rights for his adopted brethren. We cannot, however, help regretting that he should not have chosen a wider field for the employment of his powerful talents, and have produced works, which, like his later publications, should have addressed themselves more

generally to the public. Still, it is not for us to estimate the good which he may have done. In the part of Lincolnshire in which he resided, Catholicism was either unknown, even by name, or it was imaged forth to the retired population, clothed in all the repulsive hues of interested or malicious misrepresentation. Whoever aids in removing misrepresentation, on any subject, benefits his fellow-men. Many scattered and dispirited Catholics were encouraged by his example to avow the faith which they still cherished in secret: and a large chapel and congregation now flourishes in the neighbouring town of Boston; in which, at the time of his first settling in Lincolnshire, scarcely a Catholic was known to exist. Here, therefore, he more remotely accomplished the good of which he had been, immediately after his conversion, the active agent in Lincoln. In that ancient city, the profession of our faith had almost entirely disappeared: a few timid and disheartened Catholics alone lingered around the miserable shed which served them for a place of worship. These did Mr. Beste's example encourage and incite. By means of a voluntary subscription, to which he himself contributed seven-eighths, a house and land was purchased in a convenient part of the city, and a commodious chapel soon called together the scattered flock of the neighbourhood.

On this occasion, we might amuse our readers by a relation of the horror which was felt by the good Protestants of this cathedral city by Mr. Beste's presumption in placing a plain stone cross over the door of his chapel. Many were the vows of vengeance and the threats uttered against him and the priest for this exaltation of the obnoxious symbol! nor could the violence of their opponents be appeased until they had been induced to lift their eyes

to the many flowery Gothic crosses which still remained, in unmutilated beauty, on the walls of their cathedral. The existence of such a hostility will hardly be credited by those whose experience does not reach into the last century. A better feeling now pervades our separated brethren; and, on all the new churches so plentifully dotted over the land, we joyfully see the symbol of our common hope rise triumphant and respected in lieu of the glittering and long-endured brass weather-cock. Of the two, the cross is certainly the most decorous ornament for a Christian temple! Gladly, therefore, do we again see it stand out against the blue vault of a merciful heaven!

La triomfante croce al ciel si spande!

In 1818, Mr. Beste left England for the Continent, and resided with his family in the south of France, and in the different capitals of Italy, till the year 1826. Of this residence he has given an account in "Four Years in France," and in "Italy as it is." These were published soon after his return to England. The first book is prefaced by the account of the author's conversion to the Catholic faith, from which we have so largely quoted; and we remember few works, the announcement and publication of which occasioned so great a sensation. Nearly a thousand copies were bespoke before the work was published; and scarcely was there a journal or periodical publication in London that did not criticise the performance at great length. It is scarcely necessary to say that the great majority of these reviews, while speaking in high commendation of the author's style and ability, remarked in no measured language on his religious opinions, and on some extraordinary occurrences related in the work, and supposed to be supernatural. One writer

frankly said, "The author is a man of first-rate judgment and talent, except when the wind blows north-west; on matters of religion he is *clean daft*."

To a rightly-minded man, the opinions of one whom he acknowledged to possess "first-rate talents and judgment," ought to have appeared more deserving of consideration. Like the "works" which our blessed Lord declared should testify to His truth, the acknowledged mental superiority of any man ought to secure decent and deferential attention, even to what may be supposed to be his peculiar opinions.

"Personal and Literary Memorials" appeared not long after the first two publications:—a volume abounding in controversy, in politics, in piety, in learning, in anecdote, wit, satire, and playful humour. And such, in truth, is the general character of Mr. Beste's writings:—an easy flow of natural language connects passages of deep thought and playful fancy, while the whole is inseparably intermingled with a sub-acid vein of personal anecdote and enlivening fun. The "Personal Memorials" is the best book we know for the lover of occasional snatches of thought-inspiring reading; for Mr. Beste never exhausts a subject, to make up a book; his works merely *donnent a penser*—to those who are capable of the exercise.

In connection with what has been stated, we may remark, as a curious coincidence, that the doctrines of the new school at Oxford were promulgated shortly after the publishing of these works.

The work which we now submit to the public was written during the last few years of his life. Enfeebled in health and constitution, he seems to have felt himself unequal to the toil of producing any more laborious compositions. His thoughts, and feelings, and principles of action, were, therefore, embodied and

connected in a form of narrative, less fatiguing than any argumentative essay would have been. Yet the tone of the work was even then so exalted and religious that we did not deem it advisable to adhere strictly to the narrative as compiled by the writer. With affectionate regret, we have altered and condensed the "plot" of the story, so as to make it more acceptable to the general reader. The addition of some half-dozen pages, at different parts of the narrative, has produced this result. Some passages in the original we have omitted; and we have supplied their places by others selected from a mass of manuscripts on the same or similar subjects. With these exceptions, the work is as it was left by the author: with the exception of these half-dozen pages, all of it was written by him: we would, on no account, have attributed to him a sentiment that was not his own: nor would we have made any change whatever in the course of the narrative, had we not been induced to do so by the hope that we might make it interesting to the most superficial reader, without lessening its claims to the consideration of the man of thought.

During the last winter of his life, Mr. Beste resided in France. He returned to Brighton at the end of April, 1836, enfeebled in health, and disabled by a sudden attack of rheumatism; but that he was even remotely in danger, no one anticipated. He refused medical assistance, and had engaged a house for a twelvemonth, to which he moved with his family on the 27th of May. He was then cheerful and happy: talked much of the comfort he felt in having recently received the holy sacrament; and expressed himself as "prepared as sinful man could be to meet his Redeemer, whose divine mercy he anticipated as the reward of an *honest life*." To his

family he frequently expressed a wish that they might all go to heaven from the house he had just entered; adding also, "only make me comfortable to-day, I will make myself happy to-morrow." And yet the other parts of his conversation shewed that he had no idea that his end was near:—but how often do we see this prophetic, this anticipative spirit declare itself, although unheeded at the time, and blend wonderfully with vain projects for the never-to-be-welcomed morrow!

The subject of this memoir, dismissing his family with the words, "I wish to say my prayers," retired to rest between eleven and twelve o'clock. Soon after one, the house was alarmed by his sudden cries for more air; at two o'clock, his spirit was in the hands of that Redeemer, to comply with whose dictates he had sacrificed what *then* appeared so much, what *now* seems so little, in this world. Who may doubt but that his hopes and pious anticipations have been realized?

He is interred in the old burial-ground of the parish church of St. Nicholas, at Brighton.

This is no place to enter into any lengthened disquisition on the merits of Mr. Beste as an author. Some remarks have been already hazarded: we will now add that, while we most admire the terseness and raciness of his style, this very quality often appears to us to have induced a want of consecutiveness and amplification in his course of argument. He wrote as if his readers had the same quick apprehension, the same power of allusion (that pleasantest of mental powers) as himself; as if when he had presented to them a subject of thought, whose few prominent points were brightened by a vivid and playful imagination, they would themselves be able to follow out the argument.

The religious feelings which he entertained during the earlier part of his life, have been since taken up by a large and most influential portion of the Anglican clergy. May they imitate a consistency of conduct which they cannot fail to respect!

Botleigh Grange, August, 1845.

POVERTY AND THE BARONET'S FAMILY.

CHAPTER I.

In the spring of the year 1805, in the neighbourhood of Athlone in the centre of Ireland, a poor cotter, Albert O'Meara by name, took to wife Bridget Bryan, a maiden of his own degree. Their nuptials were attended by their parents on both sides, and by a numerous assemblage of friends. Love and poverty were to be the portion of the united pair; they had been accustomed to the latter, and they sought relief from its hardships in the joys of the former.

They had a potato-ground and a pig; and "lived pretty" for the first year after their marriage, when a daughter was born, who received her baptism from the priest of the parish, and the name of Bridget from her mother. As the constant labour of both husband and wife had been indispensable to their obtaining their necessary subsistence, the interruption of the daily work of the woman by what, in high life, would be called her confinement, and by the care of her helpless infant, subtracted something from their means. The child, however, was a welcome guest; its food was supplied by nature: it thrived for eighteen months; when a cold, caught during a late and dangerous dentition, carried it away to that heaven where the angels of "little ones" see the face of their Father.

In the following summer, Albert was gratified by the birth of a son; the heir, the aid, the companion of his toils;—such, in his estimation, his little Bryan was to be. These toils had, however, become daily more inadequate to the support of the family; he had fallen into arrears for

his rent, and the tithe must be paid. In the autumn, a neighbour, John Conolly, returned from England, whither he had gone to obtain the high wages paid for harvest-work in the thinly-peopled districts. He had there taken wheat to reap at twenty shillings an acre: "To be sure," he said, "the farmers could not help themselves; it was better for them to pay twenty shillings to us than forty to their own people, as they must have done, or have let the corn rot on the ground. So you see, Albert, I have brought back to Athlone sixteen dollars and a golden guinea." In the pride of his heart, John Conolly stepped into his cabin and brought forth a piece of sacking, which he opened, and displayed his treasure; making Albert observe the little head of his Majesty King George stamped upon the neck of the original impression. The guinea he shewed with especial triumph. "The farmer said it was the last he had; for they had sent all their guineas abroad to fight Buonaparte, and cannot afford to make any more. I shall get an abatement from my landlord for paying him in good money!"

The imagination of Albert O'Meara was fired by his friend's narrative and high spirit. The sufferings of the ensuing winter, the increase of the arrears of rent and tithe, and the decrease of his store of potatoes; all determined him to undertake the journey to England in the following summer of 1809. And his wife then resolved to accompany him. Albert in vain tried to persuade her to remain: "John Conolly's wife," he insisted, "stays at home." "She has three babies," replied Bridget; "and she cannot take them or leave them: we have but one, since it has pleased God to take our little Biddy. I will carry Bryan along with me." The child, now in its thirteenth month (we love to be particular in dating the first actions of our future hero) was tottering across the clay floor of the cabin, when the mother, catching it up in her arms, said, "Will Bryan go to England with father and mother?" The child uttered some sounds which the eager mother chose to interpret as an assent. Albert looked at his wife and child, and thought what a comfort they would be to him in a foreign and hostile land; and the day of their departure was settled for the morrow of the feast and bonfires of St. John Baptist.

A party consisting of a father and son, distantly related to Bridget, together with three others, joined them from Connaught—a country proverbially poor even in Ireland. On the road, they overtook other loiterers impelled and retarded, like themselves, by restless and intolerable poverty. They crossed from Dublin to Holyhead on the deck of a vessel whereof the hold was laden with cattle; the price of the packet-boats was too high for them. The bridge over the Menai, that eighth wonder of the world—how many eighth wonders are there?—was not yet constructed. Several others of their countrymen were waiting to be ferried over the Strait; and the whole company, sixteen in number without counting our hero, thence proceeded together on the main road, through the villages and petty towns of Wales. The dogs barked, the children hooted, the women laughed, the men were angry at their appearance. Poor Bridget's heart sank within her at this uncouth reception. She clasped her infant in her arms, and was comforted.

Conolly, being a practised English tourist, perceived, after the first day's journey, that there were too many of them together; and proposed that, on their arrival at Holywell, Albert and the Connaught men should strike off to the right, for the vale of Clwyd, and thus lessen their number.

On the evening of the first Saturday after their landing, they drank of the waters of the well of St. Winifrid; and next morning attended mass, where their prostrations, their occasional exclamations, and other tokens of the vivacity of their devotion, caused not a little surprise to the quiet and recollected congregation. Conolly, who was known to the priest, went to him after prayers with Albert and Bridget; they were admitted into his little parlour where he sat at breakfast. He spoke to them words of encouragement and consolation with affectionate charity: "May God protect thee and thy infant," he said to Bridget; then to Conolly, "Where are the rest of your countrymen? My heart is open to them all. Alms I have none;"—this was not quite true, for he had slipped a piece of silver into the hand of Albert—"for my own flock are poor and ill supplied; but it may do them good to see a friend."

"Sure enough," cried Albert, "it does one good to look upon your reverence; and excepting your reverence and the like of you, we will not find many friends in this country."

"Indeed, now," interrupted Conolly, "near Grantham, in Lincolnshire, there lives a Catholic gentleman, of the name of Harrison; he is so kind, and talks so freely, he is just like one of us."

When Samuel Johnson was in the Highlands of Scotland, they shewed him a tree and told him there was another as large as that five miles off. It seems that the friends of the poor Irish in England are more thinly scattered than trees in the Highlands of Scotland. Will time and the Union increase their number? Sir Hudson Lowe consoled Napoleon, complaining of the want of trees at St. Helena, by assuring him, "*On en plantera;*" yet life is short, and enmities are long, and trees are slow of growth.

"We ought not to have troubled your reverence at breakfast," apologized Bridget; "it is now past mid-day, and you could not eat till after mass."

"Never mind," said Mr. Wright; or, if it was not that pious, learned, humble, but lofty-minded man, it was one who resembled him: "never mind it. I am used to such interruptions. Go to my housekeeper and see if she can be of any service to you: and do you, Conolly, call your countrymen."—They came. Mr. W. made them approach his opened window and gave them a few words of advice: "Your lot in life is toil and poverty: you may make of that lot a dispensation of Providence for your eternal welfare. But remember that, not to the poor, but to the poor in spirit is the kingdom of heaven;—to those who endure in the spirit of penance; who, after the example of our Master, take up their cross with joy. Do not resent the injurious treatment you may meet with from the people of this country: pity them and pray for them: they are proud of their prosperity—forgetting that it is not the greatest blessing that God has to bestow. Your country has retained the true faith: adorn it in all things; by complying with your Christian duties as often as opportunity may offer; by fidelity to your employers; by meekness to all. Especially avoid all excess in drinking; in itself a sin, and one that may lead to quarrelling."

Mr Wright addressed his hearers in a familiar but earnest manner. Their hearts were touched, and his own was joyed by the sympathizing and grateful looks of all. "God reward your reverence," they cried aloud; and each bending a knee added, "Give us your blessing." Gently and with an affectionate smile, the priest raised his right hand and made the sign of the cross, which each one, at the same moment, described on his own person.

Such was the soothing effect of this scene on the travellers that they felt disinclined as yet to part from each other. They wandered together to the ruins of the monastery at a little distance from the town; and, within the crumbling walls of its church, adored, with regret, but in resignation, the dispensations of Him who "giveth and taketh away." They looked towards the estuary—to that sea which divided them from their native land, and, sitting down on its shore, partook of a repast which, it need not be said, was frugal; though supplied by the united stores of all. They returned to vespers; and then, once more drinking together of the holy well, they left the town; the party who had quitted Athlone in company bearing away to the right hand, while the other pursued the main road.

The vale of Clwyd wants nothing but a river to render it the most beautiful, as it is the most fertile of valleys. Our infant hero, with his parents and their friend and the five men from Connaught, arrived at Denbigh; and in the castle—not the inn, but the proud ruin that domineers the subject vale—in one of the deserted courts of this baronial abode, they found a gratuitous lodging for the night. The next morning they placed themselves on the circular steps of the great market cross—once here triumphant, but of which the fluted staff now alone remains. Their purpose was made known by the seats they occupied, for such is the practice of labourers who want employ: besides, their appearance declared who and what they were. They received the usual greeting of contemptuous looks and sneers; but remained, not otherwise molested, till a farmer came up who wanted two men to assist him in a press of work. He chose the father and son whose name was Moylan; agreed with them for wages at his hay and fallows; "and then," he said, "I will let you

some wheat to reap if we can agree: if not, you will be no worse off than now; for you will be in time for harvest in the fens, where, I take it, you are going." He led them to an opening in the street, whence he pointed out to them his own farm-house in the midst of a region teeming with the bounties of nature and smiling like Paradise.

The Moylans bade a kind farewell to their friends; who, after waiting at the market cross till past mid-day in hope of a similar engagement, proceeded on their journey eastward. Their track was irregular, as they turned aside to the farms that lay within a short distance of their road. The refusal of their demand for work was usually simple; but sometimes softened by the gift of a little food or drink. Bridget and her infant attracted notice and pity: and Albert was pleased to find himself favourably looked upon on account of his wife's proof of her love in accompanying him, and the cheerfulness with which she supported her fatigues.

Among these fatigues, that of the burthen of little Bryan was not to be reckoned: it had been shared by the men of the company from their first departure from Athlone: those even who had joined them on the road had been anxious thus to recommend themselves to the only female of the party; and the child was passed from one to the other during the day as belonging equally to all. In after-life it was remarked, that he bore with peculiar steadiness the gaze of those who, with whatever meaning or purpose, fixed their looks on him: and his mother, whose powers of observing and reflecting had been methodized by the peculiar and unusual care with which her education had been conducted by a distant and aged relative, a holy and learned priest—his mother believed him to have acquired this advantage from being habituated, during this passage of his life, to encounter the expression of so many marked physiognomies;—such as would appear ferocious to the simperers of a drawing-room, and from which the fastidious or the timid would turn with affected or real terror.

That a lesson of moral courage should have been thus early and by such means inculcated, ought not to be deemed improbable: though the fact, in the present instance, rests on the vulgar authority of a poor Irishwoman.

The education of a sentient being begins with its sensibility; and whatever influences the habits, is part of the education.

Bridget repaid these services to her son by all the little services in her power: her needle was employed for them when occasions, alas! but too frequent, demanded its application; her skill in cookery was fully adequate to the preparation of all that their larder supplied; nor did she disdain, after the example of the king's daughter in Homer, to wash their garments in the pure waters of the flowing brook. Her cleverness and activity were the theme of their admiration and praise: "What would another man added to our number be in comparison to her? Troth, but he would be a fool to her!"

The manners of the, so called, vulgar have, at least, as much tact and propriety as those of their superiors, in spite of a seeming coarseness and familiarity; and the behaviour of our travellers to their female companion was, at once, gallant and respectful. At night, her child was given up to her, and the most convenient place that could be found was assigned to this poor woman and her husband. Nor was the delicacy ever forgotten with which the Milesian Irish are known to treat their females,—a delicacy founded, not on chivalrous and self-applauding, but on virtuous and self-correcting sentiment.

Our pilgrims—and what is life but a pilgrimage?—now reduced to six in number, arrived at Newcastle-under-Line, and crossed the infant Trent; which, but that the Thames eclipses it by the splendours of the metropolis, would be the first and most important river of our island. Here, an agent from the potteries was on a look-out for labourers at permanent employ. The offers were tempting;—not indeed to John Conolly, who wished to return to his wife and children, nor to Albert O'Meara, who longed to see the smoke rising through the thatch of his cabin;—but to the three brothers from Connaught, who calculated that, by laying by half of their wages for three years, they might then return three of the richest men in their humble neighbourhood. They departed for Etruria after requiring a promise from the others that they would return that way to the port whence they should sail for Ireland; and after—let "not grandeur hear with a

disdainful smile"—after regaling themselves soberly and sparingly with an extraordinary quart of strong beer. Few are the joys of the poor: bad is the heart of him who denies them; weak the understanding of him who despises them.

Thus have we felt while portraying the difficulties and exertions of the virtuous and honoured subjects of this narrative: now turn we to a different class of actors in the tableaux vivants we have undertaken to represent.

CHAPTER II.

Our travellers were now, according to their own calculation, within five days' walk of the scene of their harvest labours. On the third day, in the afternoon, they arrived within a few miles of the town of Grantham. Conolly, who had always talked as if his visit to Mr. Harrison was a main object of his journey to England, said to his fellow-travellers: "he lives three miles beyond the next village; but we will not go there to-night, for it is likely he will be from home or have company. Let us stop at that village, and to-morrow morning we will be sure to find him. And as you are tired, Bridget, I'll go on and see for a lodging for to-night."

So saying, he went on in advance, and the others followed slowly.

Sir Cecil and Lady Foxglove, whose country seat crowned an eminence above the village of Denham, met him at the entrance of it as they were returning from an early evening walk. Sir Cecil—partly from a kind feeling towards the poor—the only portion of mankind who were not always scoundrels—so he declared his opinion—partly from the sense of the monotony of a country life, usually accosted all strangers whose dress indicated that such a liberty might be taken with them. "How now, my good fellow; where are you going?"

"We are going into the low countries for the harvest, please your honour."

"*We*," replied Sir Cecil; "why, you are alone!"

"Troth, but there were sixteen of us crossed the ferry

at Bangor; but we divided into two companies at Holywell; and eight of us went on by Chester."

"Well," interrupted the baronet, "what is become of the other eight?"

"Why, please you, two of us were hired by a farmer at Denbigh, and three more went away to the potteries at Newcastle."

"I have kept the account, but your reckoning does not quite dispose of all the sixteen."

"Your honour 's in the right entirely; there's a man and his wife that I have left a mile or two behind. The woman was tired, so I am come on to try and find them a lodging at the great white flower."

Sir Cecil smiled and bade him a good night.

The smile was caused by the name given to the sign of the public-house, the Foxglove Arms:—gules, a *Digitalis*, or foxglove flower, in pale, argent. An ancestor of Sir Cecil's, fighting at the battle of Bosworth, on the side of Henry VII. (the only king in English history worth fighting for, as being the only one that reigned for the benefit of his people)—this ancestor, Sir Lionel D'Enham, was, for a time, repulsed, and driven to retreat into a garden with the troops under his banner; his white plume, which appears to have been as celebrated as poor Murat's afterwards became, had been struck from his helmet; a large digitalis, cut in haste from the garden, supplied its place:—he rallied his soldiers, was again known to the enemy, into whom the white waving plume had long struck terror, and contributed greatly to the victory. As a reward the bearing above mentioned, with the name, was granted to him. Sir Cecil regretted the abandoned name of D'Enham, which had a better sound than the new one, but he was proud of the armorial bearings so honourably achieved. Nay, such is the weakness even of wise men—and Sir Cecil might be reckoned of their number—that he was pleased with the name given to his arms by the poor Irishman, which seemed to imply an allusion to their history. Of this, however, John Conolly had been totally innocent—knowing nothing of the matter.

Sir Cecil and his lady proceeded to the tower, under the arch whereof was kept the boat in which they some-

times amused themselves on the lake that lay beneath, and partly in front of, their house. They now entered it to pass across to the opposite lawn. Sir Cecil took an oar with the woodman, who plied the other, and a few strokes brought them to the shore below the Hall. Here a small anchor was thrown out, and Lady Foxglove, wishing to continue her walk, sent the woodman forward with some message to a servant. Thus was the boat left, for a time, untenanted.

But it was not long before the nursemaid with two children came from the plantations that ran up to that side of the house opposite to the direction in which their parents had walked away. A little girl of three years old was led by the nurse; a little boy of five years ran on before. He saw the boat, leaped into it, tottered towards the further end, and fell over; here, however, as he fell he caught hold of a slight rail which ran round the stern of the boat, and thus, without touching ground, he hung by his hands, immersed nearly up to the shoulders.

The alarm of the nurse may be supposed, but hardly her helplessness. She could only cry out, "Oh, Master Charles! Master Charles! My dear Miss Arabella keep from the water! If I leave you, you will fall in too." Albert and his wife, passing at the moment, and stopping, partly from fatigue, partly from curiosity, saw the accident from the lane beyond the water. In an instant Albert cleared the hedge, and waded through the water in a direct line to the boat. In the middle he was out of his depth; he swam a few strokes, and was again on his feet. At this moment, the frightened nurse, not knowing what she did, but anxious to do something to save her charge, having made the trembling little girl promise to stay quiet, did what she ought to have done at the first—she stepped into the boat. Inconsiderate, however, in her haste, her weight tilted it up in such a manner that the hands of the little boy, already tired, could not hold against the shock; and he fell off into the deep water. He sank, but rose again, and lay for a little while floating. Albert caught him in his arms, and carried him to land.

"God bless you, my dear," said the poor Irishman, as he stood dripping by the side of the child, who had not yet

recovered his breath ; "God bless you, and save you, to be a good man."

The nursemaid's first care was expressed in her entreaty to the children that they would not tell papa and mamma. She then thanked Albert most gratefully—shook him cordially by the hand, and gave him all the money she had about her. Albert, unable in his simplicity to appreciate the service he had rendered, thought himself well rewarded. The nurse requested him to return by a path to the lane, so that he would not be likely to meet any of the family. He followed her directions and rejoined his wife and child.

They found their friend waiting for them at the door of the Foxglove Arms, and related to him what had happened. "Sure now, but you're a lucky fellow!" exclaimed Conolly; "his honour will give you a hundred pounds, and you will go back to old Ireland and buy a field of your own, and be made a man of for life." So impatient was he, that he made Albert walk back with him to the spot from whence he had viewed the accident, assuring him that they should meet some one coming from the Hall to require his attendance. They gazed on the water; the boat was now removed ; no one was in sight. Slowly they sauntered back to the inn, and loitered on the road till the shades of night came on. They then retired to their barn, where, as the mistress of the inn had told Conolly, they found plenty of fresh straw; and this accommodation they were not accustomed to resent or refuse.

Blessed, poor Bridget ! be the slumbers which, on this lowly couch, soothe and cheer thy gentle soul! May they bring to thee holy inspirations and strength from above to enable thee to bear the trials which a merciful providence has in store for thee !—merciful, for He chastiseth whom He loveth.

CHAPTER III.

At sun-rise the next morning, Conolly roused his companions:—"We will be with Mr. Harrison in good time," said he; "and I know he will ride over and tell his honour what you have done for him; sure and doesn't it deserve more nor a few shillings to have saved the life of a young squire?"

Albert and his wife were less anxious for the remuneration than their friend was on their account. They felt, like generous minds—and such there are in the lower ranks of society more frequently than in the higher—the gratification of having rendered a great service, of having rescued a fellow-creature from the peril of imminent death. They felt an unwillingness to urge their claim to reward; although we would not have them supposed to be indifferent to it; they acquiesced, therefore, with some reluctance, in Conolly's plan of obtaining it by the mediation of his protector at the next village of Willoughby.

In the yard of the inn into which they issued from their large and lofty and straw-filled sleeping-room, they found the farmer's servants—for our publican held also a large farm under his landlord—preparing their teams for loading hay. A civil "good morning" on the part of the Irish was surlily returned by the English peasants. Such is the effect of that misrule which makes the people of one portion of an empire look upon those of another as intruders. As it is usual for foot passengers to settle their reckoning in the evening, no delay was interposed to their departure. Before they had advanced a quarter of a mile, however, Albert was seized with a shivering, and such excessive lassitude and debility, that he was unable to proceed. They all feared that he had taken a great cold by going into the water when hot with walking. It did not occur to them that the evil had been aggravated by his having slept in his wet clothes.

They sat down under a hedge, and ruminated on the difficulties of their situation.

"Well, then, and perhaps it will be better," said Conolly, "for you to stay here to-day and nurse yourself;

when you are a little better, you and your wife can go up to the Hall all alone by yourselves, you know. Eh, but I will go on to Willoughby and wait for you there till the evening. But, by the blessing of God, by that time you'll be too rich and proud to think of going into the fens for harvest work."

They parted accordingly. Albert, supported by his wife, who bore her infant on the other arm, crawled back to Denham; and she persuaded the mistress of the house to let her sick husband lie down on a bed. They were shewn into a room in which were two beds that had been lately tenanted by the farming servants. In one of these, Albert laid himself; on the other, Bridget put her sleeping Bryan. She spread her husband's wet clothes to dry in the sun on the tiles beneath the garret window, having first given him what he called his "other shirt." She then went down to get some tea for him, after taking which he fell into a slumber, while she sat beside and watched him.

In a short time the child awoke; and the poor mother fearing lest he should awaken the invalid, at length took courage to carry him down to the mistress of the house.

"Oh Madam!" she exclaimed, "if you would but be so kind as to let one of your servant girls take my little boy;—I am so afraid he should disturb his poor father. God forgive me! but I never wished my child to be away from me before now!"

The landlady was struck by this concluding phrase from one who, she knew, must have carried her child for many a weary mile. She looked at the boy—he was scrupulously clean, both in his person and clothing; the woman, who was herself a mother, was pleased to observe this, and opening a door into a little room, where were her nursemaid and two young children, told Bridget to set her boy down there. The poor Irishwoman thankfully obeyed, and having waited till the eyes of the three children met and smiled on each other, she returned upstairs.

Between one and two in the afternoon, a girl came to her with a message: "Mistress says, if you like to have any dinner, I am to wait here while you are away." Bridget wanted to see her child—she wished to shew her

sense of the landlady's attention—she was glad to be relieved for a few minutes, and, if the truth must be told, as she was not a fine lady but a poor Irishwoman, she was hungry. Seated at a little table, she fed as hastily as possible herself and her little boy, whom the mistress brought to her, bestowing on it many praises for its good behaviour. She was touched by the manner in which the grateful mother returned thanks; but, nevertheless, proposed to her a question which she would hardly have put to a guest of a higher order: "How long shall you stay here?"

"When my husband wakes, I hope we will be able to get to Willoughby. The man that was here last night is waiting for us there. He is gone to see Mr. Harrison."

This information, and the name of a visitor at the Hall, somewhat contented the mistress of the Foxglove Arms—a good-hearted woman, but anxious, like others of her trade, for a succession of guests.

Bryan was returned to his companions, and Bridget to her seat on the bed opposite her husband, when he awoke, with aggravated symptoms of his illness. Tea and other weak drinks were brought up to him in abundance. Towards evening, the landlady suggested sending for the doctor, as he was called. He was absent from home on a professional visit at some distance, and not likely to return soon. The mistress ordered the fire of the kitchen to be made up for the use of Bridget, and the door of the public-house was closed for the night—a night to be passed in distress and dismay, by two persons who had all the sensibilities of the higher classes, and for whom their poverty, instead of extinguishing, ought to enhance our sympathy.

Think, Reader, of all their trials, when, overtaken by sickness, thou thyself shalt lie on a bed of down, solaced and soothed by every appliance of art, by every attention which practised nurses and an anxious household can bestow; then, when thou shalt peevishly exclaim against every imagined neglect on the part of thy watchful attendants, and every slight delay in thy many comforts, then in thy fretfulness think of the difficulties of these two poor wanderers—the only watchers in this, to them, fo-

reign public-house. Great, we know, are thy general sympathies for the poor; hast thou ever imagined their privations in detail?

Albert entreated his wife to go into the bed on which, at sunset, she had laid her infant; but his affectionate promise, "I will not want any thing while you are asleep," would not have been verified had she yielded to his request, for he was restless, and had frequent occasion for her help She had to go down into the kitchen at intervals, to fetch him his warm drinks and to keep up a supply of them. Between two and three o'clock her babe awoke. She took him out of bed to hush him to sleep again. His father desired to see him. She placed the candle on a little table at the bed-side. Albert gazed on his son, and, with that tone of dejection which was a part of his malady, sighed deeply and gave him his blessing. Bridget removed the candle to place it in the shade; the light now burnt low in the socket, and was soon extinguished. Three little candles had been given her at the beginning of the night, and this was the last. Trifling as this incident may seem to those accustomed to consider candlelight as a necessary consequence of darkness, it added greatly to the embarrassment of this poor woman. She was in a strange house, she knew not where to go for help if needed, nor where to find what she might want. Happily, the extinction of the light seemed as a signal of sleep to Albert; he fell back in his bed, and, though moaning and unquiet, still he slept. Bridget replaced her infant in its bed, and then went and looked through the window, but was too well versed in the signs of the early morn to mistake the powerful twilight of the season for the dawn of day. To quell her impatience for its approach, she placed herself on her knees at the window, and recited the litany of the saints, supplicating those with whom Christians are in communion to aid her by their prayers, and by such means of help and consolation as might be permitted by their and her heavenly Father.

It was a comfort to her to hear the clock of the house strike three, for she knew that the dawn must soon appear. Another half-hour, and the daylight penetrated through the little panes, encrusted and discoloured though they were. Another half-hour, and the rays, then the

upper part of the disk of the sun was seen, and soon he rose in all his glory, subduing and shaming by his splendour the clouds that hung around him On how much misery, on how much guilt was he about to look down! She who, in her wretched garret, welcomed his effulgence was innocent but afflicted. Solve this problem, ye who reject revelation and the belief in a future state.

The noise of the morning preparation for the work of the farm was now renewed in the yard below. Bridget trembled lest it should awake her sleepers. At length she heard a voice familiar to her—an accent not to be mistaken; it was that of Conolly, inquiring where his friends were to be found. The farming men, who knew that it was to them that they had been obliged to abandon their room, pointed to the stairs. As he opened the door, Bridget sprang to meet him, earnestly whispering, "Oh, my dear John! thank Heaven you are come! Speak low, do not waken them." He heard, he saw enough to understand it all.

"My dear woman," said he, "you look very ill. Och! and see if the air of this room is not enough to stifle you! Go down into the garden for some fresh air, and I will wait here till you come back."

"Till I come back!" said she; "surely you will not leave us till—"

"I will not go forwards till all's well, if I stay here and work for my own bread and yours."

He led her to the stairs, and pointed out the gate of garden; and casting a lingering look behind, she did as he directed. He immediately opened the window, and sat down near it. In ten minutes she returned, and, at Conolly's earnest request, seconded by her own weariness, composed herself on the bed near her son and went to sleep.

CHAPTER IV.

We must now resume the history of Conolly from the time when he had quitted his friends. He found Mr. Harrison walking in his garden before breakfast, and was

greeted with, "Ah! my merry Milesian, are you here again? What news from the Emerald Isle?"

"Very good, plaze your honour: my neighbour, Albert O'Meara—I persuaded him to come with me this journey—and sure now he has saved the son and heir of the great baronet at Denham from being drowned in the water before the house."

"And where is your friend now?" inquired Mr. Harrison, after having heard the particulars of the accident.

"Troth, and I left him at Denham, that he might hear something from his honour by way of reward."

"A very good reason," replied Mr. Harrison.

"Besides," rejoined Conolly, "he has taken the fever by going into the water, and this morning the poor fellow was so weak that he couldn't walk at all at all."

"A better reason still," said Mr. Harrison.

"But he has his wife with him, and she will nurse him; and they will be here in the evening, and to-morrow we will be on to the fens."

"And what will you do all alone all day?" asked his protector; "stay here, or go and see Father Piron at Grantham?"

"Oh, but we'll see Father Piron as we go through to-morrow, for I would like him to know Albert and his wife; they are such good creatures, and so pious."

"And what will you do here to-day?" again asked Mr. Harrison; to which the reply was, "Any thing to oblige your honour."

With unbounded benevolence to the poor, Mr. Harrison did not wish to teach them to rely on any thing but their own resources and industry. "Why, then, I will tell you how you may oblige me, John," he said: "do you see that plot of garden-ground where the early peas were? they are all gathered, and I want the ground to be dug. I will pay your wages for a day's work, and you shall have your victuals for old acquaintance sake; now go to breakfast." But first he inquired kindly after his wife and children. Conolly gave a delighted answer, but could not help reverting to what was, at this time, uppermost in his mind:—"Is not your honour minded to ride over to Denham, to wish the baronet joy of his son's escape?"

Mr Harrison divined his meaning, but he knew Sir

Cecil's character, and believed that nothing would be so likely to divert him from a good purpose as putting him in the case of seeming "to take suggestion." He saw that he might hurt Albert's interest by being even suspected of interfering. He therefore said, "I am engaged to-day; I will go to-morrow."

John worked happily till six in the evening, having the pleasure of talking with his employer frequently during the day. He then received his wages, and went to the lodging-house in the village. His friends were not arrived. He waited an hour, and became uneasy; another hour, still they came not. Reluctantly he went to bed. Even health and labour could hardly prevent his sleep from being restless, so great was his anxiety; for he began to suspect that increased illness was the real cause of the delay. He arose with the early dawn, hastened back to Denham, and found his friends as related in the preceding chapter.

He allowed Bridget to sleep till the clock struck eight. He then approached her, and gently touched her shoulder, saying, "My dear woman, I am sorry to wake thee; but your baby wants you, and it is time for me to go to the hall. His honour will be come down, and I would not delay speaking with him."

"The baby," said Bridget, waking heavily; "let him sleep, poor child. But will you go to the hall?"

"Sure I will, and make his honour hear reason."

"Make him hear nothing but our present condition."

"But how will I do so without telling him how you came to be in that condition?"

"Well, you are our only friend," cried the poor young woman, bursting into tears, which, till now, she had not been sufficiently at ease to shed.

Conolly took the path behind the town, which was the shortest and the usual way between the village and the hall. He thus drew near the house without passing before the front windows. He saw a low gate, and venturing to look over it, perceived Sir Cecil walking on the lawn with his two children. On their turning towards him, Conolly opened the gate, and went forward hat in hand.

Little Charles, struck by the general resemblance in the

dress and figure of the man before him to that of the one whom he had seen the other evening, yet perceiving by his face that he was not his deliverer, in his surprise, and unconscious how much he was about to betray, cried out, "That is not the man, papa."

Conolly caught up the words: "No, my dear little master, I am not the man that took you out of the water; he is lying very sick in bed at the great white flower, and I am come to beg his honour to do something for him."

"What man? What water? What do you mean?" cried the baronet.

"Och! that your child should be near drowning, and you know nothing of it! Is that the way of great houses?" He then related the incident; and all the particulars of his narrative were confirmed by Charles, glad to be relieved of his secret.

Sir Cecil was prompt in his decision; he said to the children, "There, go into the house to your pretty nursemaid;" and to Conolly, "Come along with me, Patrick;" and with hasty strides he took the path to the village. Conolly was delighted to perceive that his embassy was likely to be successful. He would not let the conversation drop, but continued talking as he ran, now before, now behind, the baronet; for he felt that it would not be mannerly to walk "cheek by jowl," as he afterwards expressed it, when boasting of his good breeding.

"Your honour called me Patrick; Saint Patrick was a great saint, your honour, but my name is John."

"Well, and John was a great saint: there were two of them; though many of us do not know the difference—the Baptist and the Evangelist."

"Plaze your honour any how, I was born on the twenty-fourth of November, and am called after St. John of the Cross."

"Why, all saints are saints of the cross, whether Johns or of whatever name, are they not?" retorted Sir Cecil. "It is the cross that makes all saints."

"Sure, and that is very true; and the cross makes all Catholics: your honour talks like one entirely."

"Well, and I am one," said Sir Cecil.

"Do you ever make the sign of the cross, your honour?"

"No; that is popery and superstition."

"Och; God bless your honour."

Not to mortify the poor fellow, Sir Cecil good-naturedly added, "Besides, I do not know how."

John, simply imagining that the baronet really wanted to know *how*, said, "Plaze your honour, put your right hand to your forehead, then to your breast; that makes one line: then from your left shoulder to your right; that makes the other line of the cross."

"What, so?" said the baronet, humouring him, and actually performing the movement prescribed by John.

"That's right, your honour," said Conolly, taking the matter more seriously than was meant by the other party.

"Well, I have often seen Catholics do it; but in such a slovenly way that I never could make it out. And now, John or Patrick, I tell thee thou hast led me to do what all the thunders of the Vatican would have in vain attempted."

John did not very well understand what was meant by the "thunders of the Vatican;" he had never heard them.

The baronet asked questions concerning the family they were going to visit, and received the answers of a friendly and partial neighbour. In five minutes, they arrived at the public-house; the mistress came out in a great bustle: "Do not trouble yourself; stay where you are, Mrs. Wicker," said Sir Cecil; "this man will shew me the way." And he followed Conolly.

Bridget had thought it well to profit by the opportunity of her husband's continued sleep, to dress her infant. She had just done so, and had set him on the floor, when the door was opened. The child had tottered to the middle of the room. Sir Cecil entered; there stood Bryan, the sun shining aslant on his face, his cheek flushed by recent sleep. His neck and arms and well-formed feet were bare; his hair in just so much disorder as to give a fine almost Murillo finish to his figure; his left arm raised towards Sir Cecil, his right extended towards the other end of the room; while his dark eyes fixed those of the visitor with a solemn and intelligent expression. The painter, to whom we have just alluded, had some such

vision in his mind, when he created the figure of our infant Saviour in that splendid work which most exalts England's National Gallery. Sir Cecil stepped back to gaze upon the child.

"What art thou?" he exclaimed; "a little angel beckoning and pointing me to a work of mercy?"

He looked in the direction in which the child pointed, and perceived at once the whole scene before him; for the beds were without curtains. Albert had awakened at the noise, and his wife discovered with horror that he was delirious. As Sir Cecil drew near, he was throwing about his arms, while sitting up in his bed, and saying, as if to himself, "I have been swimming about all night. There, I have caught him; he is safe, poor little fellow! carry him to land—carry him to land." He then began to talk of Ireland and of some family concerns which it might not be fit for a stranger to hear; at least, Sir Cecil made this an excuse for a retreat dictated by his own powerful emotions

"I will send the doctor immediately," said he to Bridget; "and will tell the woman of the house not to let you want for any thing."

He then rushed from the room, gave his orders to the landlady in passing; went to the house of Mr. Brewer, and charged him with the care of the patient; and then slowly and pensively retraced his steps to the hall.

The children were walking in the shrubbery with the nursemaid. He saw by her looks that she knew all was divulged, but he said nothing to her. He took up Charles in his arms and kissed him heartily. The maid understood the movement and looked, to use her own expression, as if her time was come; but did not dare to say any thing. He went into the library, where his lady was preparing breakfast, and who carelessly inquired of him where he had been.

"One may learn and do a great deal by early rising, my lady," he said; and recounted to her all that he had heard and seen within the last hour.

Lady Foxglove, after expressing her thankfulness to Providence, and her compassion for the poor Irishman and his family, at length turned to the topic of the nursemaid.

"The good-for-nothing, not to tell me! She shall not stay in the house another day."

Lady Foxglove was not singular in being much gratified with her power over her servants, which she considered, if she considered at all, as one of the privileges of her station. But the domestic scene which followed—we trust that our readers have not, like dram-drinkers, or opium-eaters, so deadened their natural feelings, by the high excitement of reading what are advertised as "spirit-stirring novels," as to be unable to sympathize in descriptions of domestic scenes—the scene which followed will introduce the character of this lady—and, alas! of very many others.

"Do nothing rashly," observed Sir Cecil. "A Lincolnshire farmer once said to me, when I laughed at him for keeping a man who cheated him, 'Why, I may as well keep a rogue that I do know, as a rogue that I do not know.' If you wish to have a nurse that will not tell lies, you had better send to Utopia on purpose."

Lady Foxglove had not heard of the place, and was beginning to think that the plan might be advantageously followed, although proposed by her husband, when Mr. Brewer was announced. "Have you breakfasted, Mr. Brewer?—No; I requested you to come immediately: so pray put down your hat, and draw your chair to the table. How do you find your patient?"

"A very bad case indeed, Sir Cecil; in an ardent fever."

"Have you bled him?"

"There are symptoms of peripneumony, and I thought it might relieve him: his blood is in a dreadful state. I told the other Irishman to bury it."

"They are in a wretched room," continued the baronet.

"Probably better then they have been used to, Sir Cecil. Besides, it is impossible to remove him now."

The nursemaid came in with the children. Had Lady Foxglove been present when her son was brought to land safe from the water, she would probably have fainted from excess of agitation: but though having been made acquainted with his danger, and now seeing him in safety, her mind had not that power of reflection by which the past influences us like the present. She did not, indeed,

behave as if nothing had happened; for she sprang from the chair and flew to embrace her "dear Charles." Still she seemed to feel as if his safety was a matter of course: a sort of conviction that, like Niobe, she was too great for fortune to injure. The maid, relying on the presence of Mr. Brewer for a reprieve from her expected "jobation," waited for orders. But Lady Foxglove's good manners, though she was a very lady-like woman, were the result, not of tact or benevolence, but of convention merely; and Mr. Brewer was only an apothecary. She was not restrained, therefore, from overwhelming the poor girl with reproaches; and if she did not directly apply the term "liar," she approached it, at least, by a liberal periphrase.

"Nay, my lady," said the girl, "I only kept it from you for fear of frightening your ladyship. I put Master Charles to bed directly, rubbing him quite dry before I put on his night clothes: that was all that could be done. I did no harm and told no lies."

"No quibbling," interrupted Sir Cecil. "You did not tell what you must have known you were expected to tell. Your silence implied that nothing extraordinary had happened. You deceived; and a lie can only deceive."

"Besides," said the lady, "when I asked Charles why he had changed his dress yesterday, he said that he had slipped and fallen into the dirt. He said so, no doubt, by your instructions, you hussey."

"You teach my children to lie, and put falsehoods into their mouths;" said her master. "Shame! Shame!"

Mr Brewer, offended at being made a witness to a family scene, thought it right to remind the actors in it of his presence by taking part in it: "You say you have done no harm, Mrs. Maria," he observed; "now if you had told your lady immediately, Sir Cecil might have seen the poor Irishman and procured medical aid for him earlier; whereas they did not send for me till yesterday evening, when I was absent from home. If he dies, see how much you will be responsible for."

The poor girl changed colour at this last remark of the surgeon. "I do not deny," she answered, sobbing violently; "I do not deny that I have done very wrong: but if you had but known, Sir Cecil, how sorry and how glad I was

at once when I saw you kiss Master Charles this morning! Thank God, thought I, he has a son to kiss!"

Sir Cecil was pleased with this estimate of his own profound emotion. "Leave the room," he said to her: this matter cannot be settled now. She is truly penitent, Lady Foxglove," he added; "and less likely to tell a lie again than a new one would be."

With some reluctance at foregoing the exercise of her power, the lady assented, and the nursemaid was retained.

"Call on your patient," said the baronet to Mr. Brewer, as he rose to take his leave, "as often as you judge it necessary. Do all you can to save him."

"You may depend on me, Sir Cecil, for my best endeavours, but I fear it is a lost case. The poor fellow has, I understand, been travelling on foot for the last three weeks on the hot dusty roads—a kind of labour more distressing to the body than the hardest work in the fields, and more heating to the blood."

In the evening Sir Cecil went again to the inn. Conolly met him on the stairs and exclaimed, "My poor friend will die, your honour! His eyes are as red as fire, his face is all purple, and his tongue is as black as my hat"—He looked at the hat, which he held in his hand, and which bore witness that the simile was a bad one, and smiling, notwithstanding the gravity of the circumstance, he added—"Was, when it was new, any how."

He then broke out into exclamations of grief, crying, "Oh, what will I do? what will I do? Was it not I that persuaded him to leave ould Ireland? What will become of his wife and child?"

"I will take care of them," said Sir Cecil; "do not make a noise, you will disturb him; let me pass."

He found Albert, who had slept during the day, now awake, and in a delirium.

"Are my clothes dry, Biddy dear?" he exclaimed.

"They were almost dry when you took them off, and are quite dry now."

"Well then now, let me put them on, and let us be going; we'll be too late for the wheat harvest.'

"To-morrow, darling. It is evening now, and the doctor says you must lie still."

He was quieted, and Sir Cecil endeavoured to comfort the afflicted woman.

"Where is your little angel?" he asked.

"My child, is it, your honour? Mrs. Wicker has taken care of him all day, as she did yesterday."

"Did she so yesterday? I am glad of that. I will tell her to take care of him to-night, and to send some one to relieve you in watching. Spare yourself, and support yourself. You will yet be wanted."

The poor woman wept bitterly.

Again speaking words of consolation, Sir Cecil left her. A servant of the inn came up, and entreated Bridget to try to get some rest. She refused, however, till, somewhat later, her husband sleeping, she lay down and took some few hours of troubled repose—the wants of nature overruling her affection.

At noon, on the following day, Conolly came to the Hall and announced that for which former accounts of the morning had been a preparation.

"The doctor says he cannot live over the night; but he is quite in his good senses now, and desires to have the priest to give him the last sacraments. I would go to Grantham myself in an hour's time, for when I was a gossoon I made nothing of going five times as far in a day, but how thin would I bring his riverence?"

"I will send a carriage for him," said Sir Cecil.

"And will I have to drive it?"

"There is but one objection, John; your dress is the only bad thing about you."

Sir Cecil gave his orders for the carriage and wrote to the Abbé Piron:—

"My Dear Sir,

"A poor dying Irishman requires your aid. I know you will come to him. I wish I was equally certain that you would take a dinner and a bed at my house. I am, with true respect, in great haste,

"Yours faithfully,
"C. F."

L'Abbé Piron was a native of Auxerre in Burgundy. He had been ordained a priest but a few years before the revolution. In 1792 he emigrated; that is, was banished

from France. On his arrival in England, those benevolent persons who interested themselves in the cause of the French clergy, indicated to him the town of Grantham as a place and neighbourhood where he might be supported by teaching the French language. He went there accordingly. Within two years, the priest of the little Catholic congregation at Grantham died suddenly, and M. Piron was appointed to succeed him. He had now occupied this situation for fifteen years, respected for his piety, and beloved for his amiable manners. On receiving the above summons, he departed without delay, and was set down at the door of the inn at Denham.

CHAPTER V.

On receiving the information that her husband could not survive his malady, Bridget felt a new spirit rise within her. Relieved from anxiety and doubt in regard to him, she calmly measured the extent of the calamity of his death, and resolved, after soothing the last hours of his existence, to devote herself to the care of her offspring—a care henceforward to be devolved on her alone. In this state of mind she was found by Abbé Piron, who admired, what he fully comprehended, her firm resignation, combined with tranquil sensibility.

The priest was left alone with the sick man.

In about half an hour he opened the door, and, calling to the distressed woman, said, "Your husband is a good and happy man; for yourself, I need only say, may divine grace preserve you in your present dispositions. I will return in the evening."

He walked up to the Hall and dined with Sir Cecil and his lady. Their repast was silent. Soon after the lady had retired, Mr. Piron rose—"I have heard his confession," said he to Sir Cecil, "and, as there was no immediate danger, I thought it better to give him a respite from his fatigue, and a space of time to prepare himself for what, I am persuaded, he will receive with joy."

Sir Cecil, in a hurried and undetermined manner, asked, "May I be permitted to accompany you? Is there any objection to my being present?"

"On the contrary, your presence will be a comfort to all parties. It depends entirely on yourself."

He then went to the sideboard, saying, "I shall offer no explanation or apology for what I am now doing," and took two wax candles from their stands, and, folding them up in a napkin, put the parcel into his pocket. Sir Cecil bowed his assent.

They walked down to the village together. Mr. Piron first entered the sick man's room; his wife was standing by his bedside, Conolly at a little distance. They seemed surprised at the presence of Sir Cecil, but quietly retired a few paces to make way for the approach of the priest, who addressed himself to Albert:—

"My dear brother," he said, "I hope you are resigned to the will of God, whether that will be for life or death. Be thankful that you are in the hands of infinite goodness, and cheerfully leave all to the disposition of Providence."

This he said in a tone between counselling and interrogatory. Albert signified his assent in a low and tranquil voice. Mr. Piron resumed—

"I hope you have relieved your mind from all worldly troubles; and that you undoubtingly make over the care of your wife and child to Him who is the father of the fatherless, and who defendeth the cause of the widow." To this, also, Albert assented; but the by-standers could perceive that his voice trembled, and that his lips gently quivered.

The priest then said, but in Latin, "Peace be to this house." To this, Conolly, without the least hint on the part of the Abbé, steadily replied by the usual response in the same language. Mr. Piron proceeded to administer Extreme Unction—"anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord" (St. James)—in which the self-installed Conolly continued to act as clerk.

Albert devoutly kissed the small crucifix—the source of his hope—held to him by the priest, and replied, with an unhesitating affirmative, to the questions proposed to him in regard to his faith and other necessary dispositions. He was raised in his bed by his friend, and the holy oils were applied according to the ritual.

A solemn and recollected pause ensued. Mr. Piron

then gave the wax candles to Conolly who without any instructions to that effect, went down, and soon after returned with them lighted. Then, by heating their ends, having fixed them on the table, he spread the napkin in front of them. The priest placed himself before the table, and took out a small round silver case, or box. He opened it, and made a genuflection. Albert turned his face towards the blessed sacrament with an expression of holy transport. The other Catholics placed themselves on their knees at the foot of the sick man's bed, and Sir Cecil did the same where he had stood near the window. Conolly recited the *confiteor*. The Abbé Piron then performed his part; and, with an air of devout and affectionate piety, gave to the sick man the *viaticum*—the support of the traveller, as the holy eucharist is called, when administered to the dying. He then prayed for a short time; till rising from his knees, and exhorting Albert to unite his sufferings and death to the sufferings and death of his Redeemer, he gave his priestly benediction, and withdrew.

Sir Cecil came up to the bed of Albert: "My dear friend," he said, "it may relieve your mind from anxiety to tell you that I charge myself that your wife and child shall not want."

Albert cast up his eyes to heaven, and, after a moment's silence, uttered the fervid ejaculation, "God, I thank thee!" Then turning a steady look on Sir Cecil, he whispered, "God sent me to help you; he now sends you to help me."

The baronet spoke kindly and inquiringly to Bridget. "I hope you want for nothing?"

"We want for nothing that money can do for us," she replied, with a glance towards the bed of the dying man, that expressed how severely she felt his loss. They were interrupted by a sign which the husband made to call the attention of Sir Cecil, to whom he then said, in a low but distinct murmur, "Oh, sir! be kind to the poor. Take the advice of a dying man, and I may do much more for you than you can ever do for me, for it will gain you the blessing promised to the merciful. Be kind to the poor."

Sir Cecil left the room in great agitation.

He found the Abbé waiting for him at the bottom of the stairs; and, taking his arm, they went together on the road to the hall.

"Whence is this?" said he to the Abbé; "What means it? Our people die, rich as well as poor, without help; without counsel; as they may; almost like brute animals:—for the little aid they receive from our clergy tends more to soothe, to calm, and to encourage, even to blind them, than to prepare their minds for the awful change by inspiring hope, based upon previous innocence, or repentance. They inspire hope, indeed, but it is not a conditional hope; they bid them trust in the merits of their Saviour, but they do not insist upon feelings that may co-operate with those merits. In short, and I believe a few words will express the whole difference, they meet them as human friends and counsellors, rather than as priests of God. Now, with you, a poor wandering labourer dies, and France, Ireland, and England kneel at his bedside. Samuel Johnson said, 'I wish I were a Catholic; there are so many helps in that religion; but an obstinate rationality prevents me.' Why ought not his rationality to have told him that, if the religion was not true, there could be no helps in it; and that, if true, that which he boasted and followed as his rationality was a most treacherous guide?"

"But his obstinacy upheld and deceived it," said Mr. Piron; "besides, he knew not the grounds of his own faith."

"I, too, wish I were a Catholic," said Sir Cecil: "I am sure I should be a better man." Then suddenly changing the topic, he exclaimed, "How did that poor fellow learn Latin?"

"He has probably served at mass when a youth," replied the priest: "I have taught four or five boys in succession to serve at mass since I have been at Grantham."

The baronet related what had passed after the Abbé had left the room; observing, "Those who have nothing are as independent of wealth as those who have superabundant affluence. The man did not thank *me* at all. And then the reply of the woman made me feel my own nothingness and the impotence of riches."

"They had higher and better thoughts, Sir Cecil."

"I know it, Abbé."

"Mr. Piron," added Sir Cecil after a few moments' silence, "I never have been hard-hearted to the poor; but I have been careless, and have assisted them only *par occasion*. But I will reduce my alms to method. I will set apart a certain sum yearly to make sure of giving, at least, that sum. Will you help me sometimes in the distribution of it?"

"Most willingly, Sir Cecil: and I return my most grateful thanks on the behalf of the poor who will partake of your bounty."

They arrived at the hall at a late hour. Lady Foxglove was much concerned and interested in the relation given by her husband of the state of the poor family. But the feeling of the party, being under different influences, did not entirely harmonize, and the conversation was not sustained. A supper-tray was brought in: Lady Foxglove invited the Abbé to take a sandwich: he excused himself on the plea that it was Friday. This her ladyship had known at dinner-time, but had forgotten it. The Abbé helped himself to fruit, and, at ten o'clock, took his candle and retired to his own apartment.

"That is an excellent man," Sir Cecil said; "his very look beams piety."

"Oh yes," carelessly assented Lady Foxglove: "I wonder why he would not take the sandwich!"

"Probably," rejoined her husband, "because meat is forbidden on Fridays in the Book of Common Prayer."

Lady Foxglove was mystified: but too indifferent to ask for information, she quietly withdrew.

CHAPTER VI.

The relation in the preceding chapter, of the mode in which the Church prepares the mind and strengthens the soul of the dying, may, we fear, be a cause of offence or misapprehension. The pious Catholic may deem that such matter ought not to be brought forward in a work of that class of which all aspire to be and some really are—works of amusement.

Still the Catholic reader must know that, under the supposed circumstances of our narrative, what we have related would have been really done; and the scene has been described by us under the conviction that whatever may tend to render the pious practices of the Church better known to our separated brethren, will be productive of good by removing mistaken prejudices.

But what is venerable, it may be urged, we expose to derision. Derision can be abated only by informing the conscience of the derider. For want of such information, when persons of this description pass over to the continent and see the *Host* borne in triumphant procession, they laugh at the imbecility of the stupid crowd; when they see it carried through the street to the apartment of the dying, they sneer at the gaudy canopy, the tinkling bell, and the prostrate adorers. Now that they are told of its being thus silently brought, in England, on the person of the priest, so consistent are they that they may not the less mock both at what was of necessity wanting to a due ceremonial and at what was attempted to supply that want. That they will mock at the contrivance of poor Conolly, of fixing the candles on the table in their own wax, we well know; for he himself had recurred to that expedient rather than meet the captious curiosity of the family below; whom, nevertheless, he heard muttering, in the spirit of derision, that "the Papists were going to burn daylight."

But this derision was occasioned merely by the want of information on the part of the scoffers.

After the departure of those to whom he owed the consolations of religion poured into his soul and the promise of protection to her whom he loved dearly as his own soul, Albert said, "Now I am happy." Thus exhausted by fatigue and tranquil in mind, he fell into a slumber that lasted for two hours. The time was employed in prayer by his wife and friend.

"My darling Biddy," he said, when he again awoke, "I am dying. We have a little infant in heaven: I hope to go to her. You will take care of poor Bryan.—So, by God's mercy, we shall not be parted. It is far from earth to heaven—a long and weary way; but it is very—very near from heaven to earth."

"Take care of Bryan yourself, Biddy dear," he added,

after a pause; "do not give him another father. I wouldn't bear to think of it.—No other can love you as I have done."

"I never could love any other as I have loved you, dearest Albert," his wife instantly replied. "If life be spared me, I will live to take care of him for his own sake and for yours."

After a little while, Albert cried, "Oh my poor father! this will be sad news for him. John, you will tell him that I begged his blessing with my last breath; and sure he'll forgive me if ever I've done any thing to vex him."

"Forgive me, Albert—my poor dear Albert!" sobbed Conolly; "Wasn't it myself that brought you here?"

"Forgive you, John! and sure you meant my good; and you came with me yourself. Our heavenly Father orders all for our good. Oh, Biddy heart, come and sit near me and lay your hand, darling, on mine," he faintly added, and fell into a stupor that continued for an hour. The last convulsions then came upon him: his wife supported him in her arms, and Conolly repeated a prayer commendatory of a departing soul—such as the "passing bell" used to suggest to all within its range;—and the soul of Albert departed in peace, and he rested from his labours.

The grief of the widow was calm. She had even the firmness to repress the too lively emotions of her friend; who at length recollecting himself, left the room. The people of the house had retired; but the mistress had left a nurse below to wait the event which Conolly announced to her. She went up-stairs, and having assisted in disposing the body, persuaded the desolate young widow to lie down in another room till the morning. With reluctance she yielded, lest she should not be able to continue to nurse her baby. The grief of the widow yielded to the affection of the mother.

The news was carried to the hall early the next morning; and Sir Cecil announced it to the Abbé with a look almost of dismay. After breakfast, he took him to walk on the lawn.

"Let me consult you, Abbé," he said, "on the provision to be made for the poor widow. To raise her above her condition in life, would be folly; even to set her above

the necessity of industry and parsimony would be to do her no service. She may possibly marry again; as I mean her pension to be for life, that possibility is a reason why the pension should be small. As to her son, it would be no advantage to him were I to force him into a gentleman; it would be to make of him perhaps an useless, certainly in his case, a discontented being. What can be done for *him* must depend on his future character." He then mentioned a very low sum as the intended annuity, adding, "if you think that too little, I can increase it from the fund which, as I said last night, shall be set apart for yearly alms."

"Your views of the matter, Sir Cecil," replied the Abbé, "are very judicious; and you can adopt the means of giving effect to those views according to the occasions that may arise."

"To prevent any arrears in case of demise," resumed Sir Cecil, "the pension shall be paid in advance half-yearly; and I will give her, moreover, at present a year's income, to take her back to Ireland or to settle her at Grantham, if she shall choose to remain in England. Will you have the goodness to talk with her on this subject, and obtain her determination on this point?"

The priest promised compliance.

Conolly now made his appearance, crying and sobbing like a child, "Och hone! Och hone! They've put him in his coffin, and he is to be buried this blessed afternoon. And it's myself is the cause of it!" Consolation was attempted in vain till Mr. Piron said, "I will come in an hour and read the burial service over him. Will you go with me, Sir Cecil?"

"King James the Second," replied the baronet, "went to mass within the city of London, where it is the duty of the Lord Mayor to bear the mace before his Majesty when going to church. When they came to the door of the Catholic chapel, the mayor stopped short and drew aside for the king to enter; 'Will you not go any further, Mr. Mayor?' said the king: 'Please your Majesty, I am afraid I have gone too far already.'"

"You make the application to yourself, Sir Cecil," said Mr. Piron; "but, I trust, you have more sense than the Lord Mayor."

Sir Cecil made no rejoinder; but, turning to Conolly, inquired with much kindness concerning the poor widow.

"Arrah faith, she passes my comprehension," he replied, "she's so quiet; though sure she's mournful enough, God knows! Hasn't she watched, bating four hours, for three days and two nights, except this morning, when she slept till the sun was high, she was so tired?"

"And the poor little boy?" asked Sir Cecil.

"She has niver seen him if it wasn't by snatches for the last three days; but now he is sitting on her knee crying out for his father; and faith it goes to the poor woman's heart, as well it may, and she turns as pale as death."

"And how do you fare, my good friend?"

"Arrah, your honour, they have given me more than I could eat because of the appetite that I lost; and a room all to myself where I wouldn't get any sleep for running to see all night long how did poor Albert."

Sir Cecil now asked him how much he earned by working in the fens last harvest.

"Five pounds one shilling, plase your honour."

"Well; call here on your return; and whatever you may gain this year I will double it. I know you will tell me truly how much it is; for if you tell me more than it is the priest will send you to the devil."

"Faith, and I would send myself to the devil if I would cheat your honour!"

"You are answered, Sir Cecil," said Mr. Piron.

"And do you, too, join in reproving me, Abbé? Well, I deserve it: but I may be a better man yet. I have witnessed, during the last twenty-four hours, more of sincere faith and profound piety than it has been my lot to observe during the whole course of my life.

Conolly retired, and as Sir Cecil and Mr. Piron continued walking, the latter went to a small box-tree that grew on the lawn, and, breaking off a little branch, said, "You are used to my petty thefts, Sir Cecil. This I want for an *aspersorium*. You say that we have borrowed this practice of sprinkling water over a corpse from Paganism—

Spargens rore levi et ramo felicis olivæ:—

we have borrowed it whence the Pagans borrowed it—from nature. Its allegorical meaning is natural; and not only the Jews, but people of all quarters of the globe, at least in temperate climes, have adopted the symbol. With this branch I shall sprinkle the remains of the poor man; his wife and friend will do the same, and will feel somewhat comforted; although neither will believe in any innate virtue in the rite itself."

At noon, Mr. Piron went down to the inn and was received by the afflicted widow with heartfelt thanks for his charitable attention. Having gone through the order of burial which, as a Catholic priest, he would not have been allowed to perform over the grave, he said to her, "I have a private communication to make to you from Sir Cecil Foxglove; step with me into the garden."

"Oh! might I beg of your reverence," Bridget replied, "to walk with me to the churchyard? It is not far; and I would see the place where they will bury my husband. I *must* see it when I'll follow his body to the grave; but then, may be, there will be a crowd, and I would see it first alone."

The sentiment implied in these words affected Mr. Piron, and he went with her. On their way, he detailed Sir Cecil's message in regard to her and her son, adding, "You have now to decide whether you will remain in England, or return to your own country."

She did not answer, for they were now arrived at the gate of the churchyard. They entered it on the southern side, and saw many graves, but not any newly dug; they went round to the northern side of the church, and there, close to its wall, a heap of fresh mould indicated the spot; and the widow drew near to it with trembling steps.

She bent her eyes downwards on the narrow space that was, ere long, to hold the mortal remains of him she had loved so dearly. She said nothing, but her lips moved in prayer. The priest respected her grief, and was silent also. At length, she cast a melancholy look around, and faltered out, "They have given him the place where they do not bury any one else."

Mr. Piron observed that it was far better that it should be so; as it was less likely that the grave would be disturbed.

"But here, under this big north wall," she added, complainingly, "there can never be any sunshine here."

The Abbé approached her with solemnity in his look and manner; and holding one hand towards her to fix her attention, and pointing with the other to the grave, he said, with a deep and tremulous voice, "The sun shall not shine upon thee by day, neither the brightness of the moon by night; but," he added, raising his hands towards heaven, "but the Lord himself shall be to thee for a perpetual light, and thy God for thy glory."

Bridget sank down on the fresh mould and wept. "These," she exclaimed, "are the first tears I have shed since my husband's death; and oh! what a comfort they are to me!"

As soon as she had risen on her feet, the priest gently drew her away from the grave; and then urged her to tell him whether she would remain at Grantham, or go back to Ireland.

"What! never again to see that dear spot?" she said, casting a lingering look behind: "yet," she added, "to be a forlorn widow in a stranger land! And dear Ireland!—oh! your reverence, advise me!"

"If you remain in this neighbourhood," counselled Mr. Piron, "Sir Cecil will have more frequent occasions of being kind to you, and will be more likely to befriend your son. When he shall be in some way provided for, you will be able to return; but, till then, do not go to a distance."

She signified her compliance without further deliberation.

"Then come to Grantham this very evening," said the Abbé. "My housekeeper will take care of you and your little one till you find a habitation, which may be done early next week."

She expressed her gratitude. Mr. Piron left her at the inn, and reported this arrangement, but without its motives, to Sir Cecil.

While they were conversing, Mr. Harrison arrived. He had been informed of the death of Albert, and now congratulated his neighbour warmly on the safety of his son, while he warily abstained from allusion to any possible

plan for the future assistance of the poor widow and her child. It being Saturday, and his office at Denham being accomplished, the Abbé left the hall with Mr. Harrison, to whom he recounted the baronet's plans in regard to Bridget, which were not intended to remain secret.

In the summer time, while an evening walk was possible, dinner was served at the hall so early as five o'clock. Sir Cecil was about to seat himself at table, when the tolling of the passing bell struck on his ear. Resting his hands on the back of his chair, he listened to the sound attentively for some time; then, turning to his wife, he said, "I cannot dine, Bella, while he who saved my son is borne to the grave;" and he withdrew into the library. Lady Foxglove followed him. She was shocked at the idea, she said, of his going without his dinner; he would injure his health. But her "affectionate importunities," as Sir Cecil called them, only irritated him; and she returned to the dining-room. Towards the end of her meal, she sent to know whether he would have any thing kept hot for him.

Sir Cecil says, "No, my lady."

"Where is he?"

"Walking on the lawn, my lady; holding the hand of Master Charles."

During this space of time the body of poor Albert was conveyed to what is emphatically called his long home. The crowd, the object of his widow's dread, consisted of the minister, his clerk, the four bearers, and some boys and girls who had been summoned by the bell to play about in the church-yard. The fever of which Albert had died had necessitated a speedy interment, and was also an excuse for not doing what ought, indeed, in no case, to be done—for not carrying the corpse into the church. Bridget was tranquil; and Conolly was compelled, by her example, to restrain his grief. They waited till the earth was thrown back into the grave, when, kneeling on the heap that covered the precious relics, they repeated the psalm *De profundis*. Then, mournfully, they returned along the valley; their silence interrupted only by the murmuring of the pure waters of the brook, and the babbling of the equally pure, equally

unconscious, Bryan. His mother did not try to check him; she smiled through her tears.

High on the slope of the hill, fronting the south, stood the house of Mr. Harrison. Thither, according to his desire expressed to Conolly in the morning, they wended their way. He himself advanced towards the mourners when they entered the grounds, wishing to spare Bridget the pain of meeting any of his people. He took her into a parlour, spoke words of kindness to her, and, what to her appeared most kind of all, admired the fine and healthy looks of her infant son. He made her drink some wine, and gave other refreshments to Conolly.

"I will not add to your pension," he said to her, "for to do so would hurt your interest with Sir Cecil Foxglove; but, in all I can, I will be your friend. You will find others in our little congregation. Do not tell any one of your pension: it would make you an object of envy and plunder to those of your own station. I doubt not, from what I have heard of you, that your prudence and good conduct will procure you the good will of every one to whom you may be known."

The widow derived from this interview both consolation and hope. She returned with less depressed spirits to Grantham; and Conolly took an affectionate leave of her for the night at the gate of the little garden in front of the modest dwelling of Abbé Piron.

Bridget here felt as if she were alone in the wide world, as she stood, for some minutes, reflecting on her situation. "Mother of God, protect me and pray for me!" she sighed, and recalling her scattered spirits, drew near to the door. Before she could knock, it was opened by the housekeeper, who, with an air of official importance, demanded her business.

"It was his Reverence that bade me come here."

Mrs. Martha, recognizing by this answer the expected Irishwoman, cried out, "Oh, I understand; come in." They passed into the kitchen. Bridget, dismayed by the stately manner of the housekeeper, stood meekly waiting to be invited to sit down. This was done by Mrs. Martha as soon as that dignified and self-complacent personage had reseated herself. The courage of the mother was restored, however, when the housekeeper,

looking at Bryan, exclaimed, "What a beautiful little boy! How old is he?"

"Thirteen months, ma'am."

"Can he walk?"

Bridget set the child on his feet.

"Poor little dear!" cried Mrs. Martha; "why he has no shoes and stockings!"

"He has never had any yet, ma'am. Next winter—"

"Aye; then he must have them, poor thing. But come and take some supper. I thought you would have been here earlier."

"We stopt at Mr. Harrison's, ma'am."

"Aye; you and the man that left you at the gate. I saw that man at Grantham last year. Mr. Harrison takes a great deal of notice of him; but Mr. Harrison is very fond of the low Irish."

"God bless him for it! It is not many that have that failing," said Bridget; for she had felt the remark as more unkind than it was meant to be.

By the bye, whence comes this phrase, "*the low Irish*," so constantly employed by English persons who consider themselves charitable and just? It is never applied to the poor of England, nor of any other country under the sun. Let those who make use of it ask their own hearts of the feeling in which it originates.

It was Saturday—at that time a day of abstinence to English Catholics. Bridget, taking a potatoe, began to feed her son, for there was no fleshmeat on the table.

"You Irish are very fond of potatoes," said Mrs. Martha.

"We can get nothing else, ma'am; and not always that."

"And when you cannot get them, what do you do?"

"We starve."

These words, dictated by the spirit of resigned and courageous poverty, astounded the housekeeper. She began to talk in a more friendly manner to Bridget, and to set her more at her ease. She told how she had been housekeeper for nearly forty years to three priests in succession; and she would willingly have sat long in a friendly gossip, had not Bryan given signs of sleepiness, on which the mother signified her wish to retire.

"Well, then, good night, mistress. Your room is on the right hand; and take care not to make a noise as you go up-stairs, for Mr. Piron"—she never said "my master"—"is a very contemplative man, and cannot abide a noise. I always open the door, as I did to you, before people knock; unless they be gentlefolks—then, you know, they must wait."

Bridget took a candle, and having found her way to her room, she placed her child in her widowed bed, and looked on him as he slept. He was to be the only comfort of her banishment from her native land, of her residence in a strange, a distant, almost a hostile country. The agitations, the anxieties of the last four days, to the endurance of which she had nerved herself by a forceful effort—these were now over; and she had leisure to feel her loss, and to look forward to her future path through life—a path mournful and solitary, but for the precious pledge of love who lay before her, and who could alone soothe that affliction, and console that solitude by filial affection and sympathy. To a mind at once ingenuous, rational, and resolved, the Christian belief is a source of motive—a principle of action; and such a mind, low though her condition, was that of the widowed mother. "The soul of my beloved Albert," she internally sighed, "is in the hands of the Lord; His providence has appointed my lot." She leant over her son and bedewed him with her tears. "I will try to draw a blessing on thy head, my darling," she continued, "by submitting myself to the will of God with patience. May His grace strengthen me to persevere; may His saints and angels pray for me."

She began and completed her devotions for the night; and pressed her humble bed, her infant in her arms

CHAPTER VII.

In "higher life," a widow, whom the death of her husband has put in possession of a good jointure, and of more personal consideration, in some respects, than she had as a wife, shuts herself up and refuses her door to all but a

few intimates, to whom she tells the secret, known to all the world, that she means "to enjoy herself, now poor dear Mr. ——— is gone." Our widow was differently circumstanced, and her circumstances compelled her to go abroad on the evening of the day after her husband's funeral.

She proceeded down the street of the town, and walked on till there ceased to be houses on her right hand, and the open country appeared. A little farther on she came to a range of small cottages, two stories in height in one of which her kind friends had recommended her to take up her solitary abode On the shutter of the second was scrawled in chalk—"To let; inquire at No. 6."

"I will fetch the key," replied to her inquiries the dweller at No 6; "and you can see the house, though it be Sunday: there can be no harm in that."

They entered the cottage together. Its walls were white washed, the floor was of brick, there was a small kitchen-grate in the chimney, and, on mounting the stairs placed in a corner of the room, she found another little grate in a chamber, partly in the roof but airy, and, like the lower room, with two windows. To one accustomed to an Irish cabin, all this appeared like the perfection of civilized accommodation, as far as applicable to the condition of the poor.

"What will be the rent?" demanded Bridget, returning the key.

"Four pounds a year."

"It is a great deal!"

It may be so; but a single room in the town will cost you as much," replied the woman. "But where are you living now?"

"I am with Father Piron till I provide myself."

"Oh! you mean the French priest? It looks well that you are in his house; every body respects him, and I shall be glad to have you for a neighbour. These houses belong to Mr. Dunn, a builder and stone-cutter; my husband works for him, so we have the letting of any house that may be empty. I guessed all along that the fellow that lived in your house that is to be," she continued with great volubility, "meant to run away; for, you see, he put nothing into his garden, and it is all overrun with weeds.

He loved his wife and children very well, but he loved drink better; so, as he knew they would have parish pay, he left them, and is gone no one knows where. But he'll be sure to get good wages for a single man, and they are taken to the workhouse. Your next neighbours are steady people enough. On one side you will have a Scotchman and his wife, of the name of Cameron; he is a good gardener, and a sort of head man in the market-garden a little farther on the road, where you see the hot-bed glasses, and they have only two children. But on the other side is a weaver; it is a bad trade, for the spinning jennies," meaning engines, "do all the work. However, farmers' wives and servants *do* spin in the long evenings, and he has jobs enough; only his wife is weakly, and they have five bairns already. But when another comes, he will go and bully the overseer for a bigger house, and so we shall be rid of them. And now, if you will come and settle among us," she concluded, out of breath, "I will go and tell Mr. Dunn that you will call upon him early to-morrow."

After a little hesitation, Bridget's assent was given. "Well, I am glad of it," said the woman; "but what name am I to tell Mr. Dunn?"

Bridget told her, and she cried out, "Oh, I shall never remember that name; but it will be no matter, you can tell Mr. Dunn yourself to-morrow. My name is Jane Allen; my husband's is George."

The next morning Bridget entered the yard of Mr. Dunn. It was strewed with hearths and chimney-pieces, window sills and stone steps, in different degrees of forwardness. Among other articles, she observed two or three grave-stones ranged against a wall. A thought immediately struck the widow; but with a delicacy which, in her character, resulted not from suggestion or imitation, but from nature and reflection, she said to herself, "I will not speak of *that* and of other business at the same time. I will return to-morrow."

Mr. Dunn received her in his little brick parlour. They entered on business, and the poor widow prayed for a lower rent. "Aye, that is always the way," said Mr. Dunn; "what with losses, and taxes, and repairs, I do not make five per cent. of this troublesome property." Then

changing his tone, for he was a good-hearted man, he added: "It is a cruel thing on the poor, that duty on building materials; it raises the price of houses to be built, and, by consequence, of houses built already. And yet they fancy it is only a tax on builders! Why we must be paid, or we cannot work; and by making our work dear to us, they prevent us from building more houses."

Having thus vented his discontent, as discontented people are wont to do, in argument not very intelligible to his hearer, he required Bridget to sign a short memorandum, and to pay rent for two months in advance, to the first day of the next quarter. Luckily for her credit with Mr. Dunn, she could write; and what was still more to the purpose, she had the money with her, though it was nearly all that remained of what had been destined for the journey into the fens. She retired, legal tenant of "the premises, with all their appurtenances."

In the course of the same morning, a kind-hearted upholsterer, or rather broker, to whom Mr. Piron had recommended the care of the poor Irishwoman in this matter, undertook to send into her new abode such articles of furniture as the habits of the country rendered indispensable to one in her situation of life, and which she herself might have been very incompetent to select. In the afternoon, these were all delivered at No. 2 in the Five Houses, as the row of cottages was named; and Bridget was cordially assisted in arranging them by Jane Allen. We need not recapitulate the few articles; they were judiciously selected by one well acquainted with the habits of the poor; and painful were the emotions of the widow in beholding, without her dear Albert, what, with him, would have been viewed with contentment and admiration. Jane Allen put an end to her musings, by insisting on her going in to drink tea with her and her husband.

"How low and vulgar is all this! Who cares for such people as these?"

We wish our fastidious reader could have heard the sermon preached by Mr. Piron yesterday—the yesterday of our narrative—on the text, "The rich and the poor meet together: the Lord is the maker of them all." "I do not charge the rich," he said, "with insensibility to

the sufferings of the poor: in their maladies, and on occasions of hurtful casualties, the rich relieve them by their bounty;—witness those hospitals with which the land is studded, in outward semblance like the palaces of nobles, and within, well regulated, provided with every comfort that can be demanded by the sick or maimed, and visited by medical skill and science. Witness the immense revenue raised annually in this country by a rate for the poor, which, though it aggravates the evils of poverty, and dries up the sources of ordinary alms-giving, is, by far the greater number of contributors, acquiesced in cheerfully, from a love of the purpose to which it is destined. In accidents by flood or fire, in any wide-wasting calamity, the rich fly to the aid of the poor: in afflictions caused by the death of near relatives, or of those to whom they had looked for support, the rich withhold not their commiseration. But I do charge it on the rich that they despise the poor; and in evidence of this charge, brought most reluctantly and unwillingly, and solely with the view to edification, I appeal to their conduct and sentiments in their ordinary intercourse with them. Intercourse, did I say? Nay, they avoid them; all that relates to their daily concerns, to their manner of existence, their feelings as individuals, seems to be unworthy of the notice of the rich. They turn from squalid poverty, as from certain disease; and from the details of a life of industry, as from degradation and intrusion. Shocked by a difference of external appearances, the rich hardly permit the approach of the poor; and deluded by the pride of wealth, they despise the great bulk of mankind, and forget that 'the Lord is the maker of them all.'"

Reluctantly did we admit the main truth of this assertion of the preacher; although, as his audience consisted chiefly of poor people, we regretted the introduction of the subject, as inapplicable to them, and not calculated to produce the beneficial effect which it might have challenged from a different congregation. It would, indeed, be often well if preachers were more careful to suit their discourses to the temporal circumstances of their hearers.

Soon after Bridget was seated at the tea-table of her friend, the husband entered the cottage. "George, here

is our new neighbour," said the wife; "there was nothing ready for her at home, so I prevailed on her to come here."

"I am glad to see you again, ma'am," responded Allen; "for I saw you this morning in Mr. Dunn's yard, though I do not think you observed me. You are welcome to the Five Houses."

"Thank you," replied Bridget "I did not, in troth, mind you this morning amongst the workmen; for, in passing the grave-stones, my mind was full of the thought that I would order one for my dear, lost husband. Will the master be at home to-morrow?"

"You need not trouble yourself to go to him," replied George, "if you will only tell me what kind of one you would have."

"You can best judge of that, Sir. Such as is fit for a poor labourer."

"Why, we seldom put up grave-stones for them; but there is no need for you to say any more; you will only have to give me the inscription."

A pause ensued. Bridget, after shedding some tears, compelled herself to be tranquil, and the conversation was resumed by George Allen, who remarked: "I ask no questions as to what you expect from the baronet. It is plain he has given you your household goods; and I suppose, and so does Mr. Dunn, he will pay your rent. I only say, if you want work, I and the other neighbours will try to find it for you."

"Sure I will want work," said Bridget, "and will be much obliged to them that will help me to it."

In forming plans for the future, and in becoming acquainted with one or two of the inhabitants of the same row, who were returning late from the town, the evening slid away. Bridget then left her newly-found kind friends, and retired to pass the first night in her own home in England.

"Are we then alone, my child," said the widow to her unconscious Bryan; "far from our own country? No, we are not alone! The good God is with us, and our real country is that where thou, my dear Albert, and our first-born babe will receive us in His good time. Oh! may I never forget his own dear parting words: 'It is far from

earth to heaven—a long and dreary way; but it is very, very near from heaven to earth.' Be with us, then, Albert, dear! and, for our child's sake, may I have health and strength, and find joy in his growth. For myself, did it please God, how gladly would I rejoin thee!"

On the following morning, Mr. Piron called. "I have brought you," he said, "the amount of the year's income given for your outfit, and the half-year, in advance, of your pension. Remember the latter must maintain you to the end of this year, including two quarters of house rent."

He stayed and conversed a little while, and inquired whether her neighbours had manifested any ill-will towards her on finding that she was a Catholic? Bridget replied, that they had only betrayed a passing embarrassment; and added, "It seems to me, your reverence, that in Ireland they hate our religion; and in England they are afraid of it—they know not why."

"I suspect that many of them know very well why," replied Mr. Piron. "They never think of it without feeling that it, and it alone, prevents them being perfectly sure that their own religion is the right one. You will find that you can never be long with them before they talk on the subject; for they feel that they will be easier in their own consciences if they can prove you to be wrong. But let me caution you to avoid all dispute on points of doctrine; excuse yourself by simply answering that such is the faith of your church. The Catholic church has succeeded to the authority possessed by Moses and the prophets; and they who wish to dispute her doctrines should first disprove her authority; *until they have done that, it is sufficient for you and for them that the doctrine in question is taught by her.*"

He took from his pocket a little volume, saying, "I want to make a present to you, according to my poor means—a *hansel* on entering your house. This is the well-known work of Thomas à Kempis, which you can never read without benefit."

She received it with thanks, and then told him, with as much calmness as she could command, of her having ordered a tombstone for her husband; requesting him to write for her an inscription:—"only the name and date,

your reverence; I would be afraid of making mistakes, if I wrote it myself." No writing materials were at hand; the priest, therefore, took out a pencil, and, on the inside of the cover of the "Imitation of Christ," wrote, from the dictation of the poor widow,

✝
ALBERT O'MEARA,
Died 21st July, 1809,
Aged 30 Years.
R. I. P.

Her tears flowed copiously; she kissed the page and the hand of the priest, demanding his blessing, on her bended knees, as he was about to quit the house.

"Be resigned, be comforted, my afflicted sister; the holy sacrifice will be offered up for him to-morrow, and on Friday." Uttering these words with much emotion, he quitted her, and proceeded on his walk.

In the forenoon of the day, she purchased mourning for herself, and a frock, of the same black stuff, for her little boy. She also supplied herself with what was wanting to the wardrobe of herself and her son, owing to her having brought from Ireland no more than could be conveniently carried on her laborious journey on foot. After paying all her bills, she found that there remained, of the sum given for her outfit, what she had purposed to send by Conolly to the father of Albert.

She took Bryan with her to chapel on the following morning, inwardly repeating, "The angels of little ones look on the face of their Father in heaven; he may look on thee on earth, and be merciful to the soul of him for whom we pray." On the Friday, she received the blessed eucharist, joining in the intention for which the holy mysteries were celebrated.

She passed the week in as much retirement as her situation permitted; and her neighbours, perceiving her desire to be alone, refrained from all but unavoidable intrusion.

Thus, reader, on the principle that the best way to remove thy prejudices is to inform thy mind—thus have we described the manner in which our poor Irish Catholic passed the first week of her widowhood. Surely, there

must be something good in the religion which produces such results! But we are not going to talk controversy to thee at present. We may not, so soon, forget the advice lately given on that subject by Father Piron. Let us rather bespeak thy patience to accompany us somewhat farther along the very unexciting track of the poor Irishwoman's footsteps, that we may discover how she maintained herself in her new position. We are aware that the annals of the poor must be most uninteresting to thee; and greatly do we deplore that Sir Cecil Foxglove did not extend the expression of his gratitude so far as to "make a lady" of the widow of his son's preserver; so that we might have followed her into fashionable society, and have described those scenes of high life which Messrs. Colburn and Bentley know to be so attractive to thee. We had, indeed, some thoughts of requesting him to do so, in order that we might thus secure the opportunity of gratifying thy refined taste, by presenting to thee the youthful widow, Mrs. O'Meara, settled in a good house at Grantham: that we might have enchained thy more congenial mind by introducing to thee all the interesting and improving details which high life must ever afford—even in a provincial town. But, on reflection, we could not—even for thy sake, we could not expose our dear Biddy, the purest heroine that was ever pourtrayed on paper, superior even to Scott's worthy favourite, bonny Jeanie Deans—we could not expose her to all the little degradations, and degrading littlenesses, which such prosperity would have entailed upon her superior mind. We could not bear to contemplate her meekly assuming the manner of a mistress to her cook and maid, and, perhaps, her footman, while the cook might put on an insolent air, as much as to say, "Why do you not wash your own potatoes, madam, as you were glad enough to do before?"

"But then the gentry," thou wilt say, most discriminating reader, "how much more interesting the tale would have been, had you taken us into their society, instead of into that of stone-cutters and market-gardeners!"

Dost think so, gentle reader? Hey, presto! thou shalt be satisfied. Call up a little of thy gifted imagination,

and thou shalt have thy wish; the best society of the respectable town of Grantham shall speak and move before thee. See, there is old lady Hurston, the widow of the great brewer that was made a knight when he carried the address to the king. She is the greatest lady in the place. Hark to her, as she affectedly says: "One cannot really visit these low people; to be sure, Lady Foxglove countenances her, but that will not bring me to call."

"No, to be sure, my lady," replies Miss Maddox, the toad-eater; "Lady Foxglove may have her reasons, but your ladyship ought not to debase yourself."

Listen also to Mrs. Glover, the rheumatic old lady, who walks every day as far as the bridge, and plays at cards every evening.

"My dear madam," she says, "you must learn to play at whist or casino. You saw how dull it was at my house for you to sit without any one to speak to you the whole evening; there can be no other amusement than cards."

Reader, I agree with thee! Much more interesting is the conversation of fashionable life than that of the vulgar; more innocent, and less egotistical also. Witness Miss Kett, the maiden lady of a middle age, who has nothing to do, and who does it. She kindly calls upon the young widow, and obligingly takes her by the hand, exclaiming, "Well, I declare, this drawing-room is very prettily furnished! Lady Foxglove's taste, no doubt? I will give you some flowers of my painting for your fire-screens. The Denham family call here sometimes; I should like for them to see my paintings."

Then the doctor and the parson—but no, we dare not say a word on the parson, lest he cite us before the Arches Court for inscribing R. I. P. on the tombstone of poor Albert!

Oh, Sir Cecil! why did you not make a lady of poor Bridget, in order that we might have introduced her and the reader into good and improving society!.....

CHAPTER VIII.

On the Sunday following, Bridget was surprised to meet, at the door of the chapel, the two Moylans, father and son, whom she had left at Denbigh. Having completed their engagement with the Welsh farmer, they were going to join Conolly in the fens. Their looks declared that they had heard of the calamity that had befallen the young mother. She took them home to dine with her, and they went forward on their way.

In the afternoon of that day, she was sitting in her door-way in the midst of a number of children, who, with Bryan, were rolling on the floor around her; for the friendly system had been established amongst the parents in the "Five Houses," that each should, in turn, take care of all the children in the row during the hours of divine service on Sundays. Bridget was sitting, so surrounded, when Mr. Harrison walked up to her on his return from vespers, or evening prayers. She rose from her chair.

"You are a happy company!" said he; "I hope you are well in health, and as happy as you can be?"

He would not let her answer the question, but looked around him, surveying the accommodations of her dwelling.

"You have a garden, I see, on the other side"—for the room had a front and a back door,—"but your plot is in a sad state."

"It was left so, your honour; but my neighbour, the gardener, says he will dig it over and plant it for me, as soon as the rainy weather comes on."

"And who are your other neighbours?" asked Mr. Harrison.

"Tradesmen's families, your honour; and very friendly and kind to me."

He turned to the children: "Now, you little ones, mind what I say: here is a shilling; as there are eight of you, that is three half-pence a-piece, you know?"

The two eldest of the children thought it right to affect to understand arithmetic, and nodded in assent.

"Well, who is to be mistress next Sunday?" continued Mr. Harrison.

"My mammy," said Jane Allen.

"Then next Sunday, your mammy must give every one of you three half-penny worth of gingerbread."

He left the shilling with Bridget, bidding "good-bye" to her and the delighted juveniles, all of whom, except the two unconscious youngest, clapped their hands in joyful anticipation. It may be doubted whether the next in years to the youngest apprehended clearly the feast that awaited them; but man is an imitative animal.

While the children were, soon after this, eating the little portions of bread which their parents had severally left for them, and while Bridget, that it might not be dry bread, was giving them to drink water from the common pump of the row, Mrs. Martha, the housekeeper of Mr. Piron, entered. After making some obvious remarks and inquiries concerning the little assembly, she turned her attention to the house and its furniture.

"Well, all very good for a poor body," she said; and, without any special invitation to that purpose, went upstairs to extend her examination thither also. On coming down, she exclaimed, "How dirty your chamber-floor is!"

"It is cleaner than I found it," said Bridget. "I have mopped it twice."

"Mopped it!" cried Mrs. Martha; "who ever thought of mopping a boarded floor? Why, you never could have cleaned a chamber in your life."

"Never," said Bridget.

"How so?"

"Our house in Ireland was built all on the ground."

"Oh, so you were used to mop the bricks."

"There were no bricks."

"How so?"

"The floors were of clay," said Bridget.

"And mud walls and thatch, I suppose?" inquired the dignified housekeeper.

"Yes; mud walls and thatch."

"Well!" she exclaimed, "you must think yourself in paradise here!"

"Very far from it," meekly answered the widow.

The composed and assured manner in which Bridget avowed the poverty of her former dwelling, left Mrs.

Martha no hold upon her. The sun was now not far from the horizon, and Bridget proposed a turn in the garden; leading forth, at the same time, her young train.

"Indeed! a fine look-out into the fields; and there is the pump, and posts, and hooks for your washing lines. But it is bad to have two opposite outer doors."

"We never scarcely open the north door, except in hot weather; we live, so to say, on this side of the building."

After more conversation, such as the state of present circumstances suggested, Mrs. Martha took her leave, with many condescending words, that intimated her future friendly protection and assistance.

Madame Rowland was very angry at the condescension of the Duchesse de ——. Our poor widow sincerely pitied the mistaken state of Mrs. Martha's mind.

As she left the door, Cameron called in, as he passed to his own house, and kindly informed Bridget that he was able to give her work, for some time to come, in the market-garden which he superintended. Cheerfully did the poor woman engage to be in the garden at four o'clock on the next morning, and to join a party in picking fruit for the day's market. Their conversation was stopped by George Allen, who, with his wife, also joined them on their homeward way; and, as the Sunday evening in England hangs heavy on the hands of most *sober* men in his situation in life, he gladly tried to beguile it away by talking on his own prospects and those of his neighbours. He explained to Bridget what were the earnings, and what the expenses, of a labourer's family in England; and proved that constant wages, to be earned both by husband and wife, were necessary to support a family, with honesty, throughout the year.

"But cheerfulness," he added, "is better than complaining; and there are many—very many—much worse off than we are." His frank and manly features put on a serious expression, as he continued: "I am young and strong, and while God gives me health, I can work;" and he stamped his foot on the ground with a degree of violence that could not be blamed when it was considered to what he, at that time, devoted himself—a life of hopeless, ill-paid toil—"but to come to the parish! If

that should befal me, I fear I should do as poor Watson did."

"What was that?" Bridget inquired.

"You shall hear. He was a bricklayer, and had an apprentice-boy, and they two could earn six shillings a day; but his wife's extravagance, though they had but one child, reduced him to distress, and. the winter before last, he applied to the overseer. 'What wages do you earn a week?' demanded the overseer. 'Six-and-thirty shillings; but I am out of work four months in the year.' 'Then you have four-and-twenty shillings all the year round? It would be wrong for me to burden the parish in such a case.' 'Then I must go to the justice,' said Watson. 'Do, I have no objection to your being relieved; I only object to doing it myself. If the justice orders it, that will be his affair.' The justice did order the relief; and when poor Watson had received the money, he went and bought a bottle of laudanum."

"I have heard," said Bridget, "that your overseers are very hard-hearted."

"So the fine folks say, that know nothing of the matter," replied George. "The overseers are ready enough to give away other people's money; but they want a working man to do what he can for himself, and the man wants to get money without working, so there is a constant squabble. What a dog of a life does Dan Butler lead! But here he comes, and shall speak for himself."

"Well, Dan," Allen cried out to him, as he stepped over the stile into Bridget's garden, "how goes on the shuttle?"

"My shuttle may go to sleep," said Dan, "and so may I."

"Nay, but you may get other work."

"Other work! I work at my trade, and if that trade fails let the parish make it up to me."

"Why, they do a good deal for you," expostulated Allen.

"They give me three shillings a week for all my children more than two," replied the weaver; "but how can they expect the three extra ones to be maintained for a shilling a week each?"

"But don't they pay your house-rent besides?"

"Aye; but that was only done because your master, Mr. Dunn, threatened to sell me up if the overseer would not be bound for the rent."

Cameron here asked him if he would let his wife or his eldest daughter pick currants and berries (gooseberries), the work to which Bridget had just engaged herself.

"I will see the currants and berries d—d first," he replied. "As I told the overseer, the poor have a right to be maintained out of the land; if the land will not maintain the poor, let the poor take the land and maintain themselves."

So saying, he walked away.

"There, now he will go to my namesake, *The George*," said Allen, "and take an extra pint of ale out of pure spite."

At four o'clock the following morning, Bridget was to be in the market-garden. Retiring, therefore, for the night, she laid ready her working dress, and put by her mourning, to be worn on Sundays—a plan we would recommend to the world at large, for three reasons: it would lessen the evil done to trade; it would accord with the dismal manner in which Sunday is observed in this country; and it would do away with the absurdity of persons appearing in mourning on festive occasions, and at places of amusement. We take occasion to recommend this plan to the leaders of fashion, who, unlike our poor widow, are independent of the petty consideration of sparing a black gown. *She* needed no show to remind the world or herself that she was a mourner.

CHAPTER IX.

"So, Judy," says Mr. Langford, the market gardener, as he approached several women already busy at their work, at four o'clock on the following morning—for Mr. Langford rose with the sun all the year round, and in summer made up for it by sleeping after dinner—"so, Judy, you keep the currants for yourself and your daughter, and set the stranger to pick berries."

"I did not set her. If she likes to prick her fingers, she has a right to please herself."

Without noticing this speech, Langford said to Bridget: "Fill your skep for the sake of your account, and then go on with the other women. Look here, too, begin with the upper branches, and, when lightened of the fruit, they will spring a little out of the way of the lower ones; and don't lose time by going from branch to branch."

"She will not make work scarce," cried Judy, "that's one comfort."

"There is work enough for you all this week," replied Langford, "and for more hands, too, if we could get them: and you, Bridget, will soon get used to old Judy's queer ways."

"Come, master, you are a good-natured gentleman," retorted Judy, as he nodded and walked away; "and I almost like better to slave for you than for any one else. Why, what are we but slaves?" she continued, half seriously and half in jest, to Bridget. "What is all the world? what do *you* think of it?"

"I think," replied Bridget, "that it is a place of trial."

"Aye; I have tried it for eight and forty years, and I cannot say I like it at all."

"It is as it pleases God," replied Bridget.

"I don't believe any such thing," answered the other; "the rich folks tell us so because they are pleased with it themselves."

"But there will be another world after this."

"The rich do not seem to believe it, by the pains they take to enjoy the present."

"Let us, then, be thankful that we are not so tempted. Poverty is blessed if the spirit go along with it."

"You are too hard for me, Biddy," retorted Judith Simmons; "but I am really discontented, and I must talk so."

Poor Rachel Butler, with her eldest daughter, was also of the pic-nic party. She had obtained her husband's leave, by pointing out to him that they might put off, for some time, an application to the overseer for farther relief. "We *jealoused*," she said, "that Archey Cameron and George Allen looked down upon him for receiving parish pay; and that had made him angry the night

before : and, indeed," she added, " it is very hard to work, only to save other people's money."

" You are right to call it *pay*," replied Archey; " for, as you have it without work, it is not wages; and if you have it when you might get wages, it is not relief. I hope your country, Bridget, and mine will never be blessed with poor laws: much as you have heard and seen, you do not yet know half the ill they do. But I am glad to see you here, Rachel."

Thus did Bridget become one of a class of persons, to whom, but a few days before, she had been a perfect stranger; and thus did she begin to compete with them in regular labour for the means of supporting herself and her child, in a land which, but one fortnight ago, she had looked upon as a foreign country with which she could never have any farther connection than that it would be the scene of the harvest labours of a few weeks. Here had her husband found his last home; here was she now domiciliated; and here was she already connected, by the bonds of friendliness and common labour, with neighbours, whose wants and interests were gradually explaining themselves to her, and gradually calling for her sympathy. She cheerfully completed her day's labour; and, although her earnings were less than those obtained by more experienced pickers, she foresaw in them the means of supporting herself in industry; and gladly learned that she would be able to get pretty constant out-door labour, either from the market-gardener, or from a kind-hearted farmer in the neighbourhood.

In the forenoon of the following day, she was resting in her low chair after her early morning work, when an open carriage, drawn by four fine horses, passed towards the town. In it were seated a lady and two children, a little boy and girl, with a female who seemed a nursemaid. Bridget knew the livery, having seen it at Denham; and, in haste, she took Bryan to her next-door neighbour.

" Ann," she said, " pray let me leave my baby with you for a while: I want to go and speak with my lady's nursemaid. Where will they put up?"

" At the great inn, I suppose;" replied Mrs. Cameron. " But they may make visits, or return, without putting up at all."

On reaching the upper end of the street, Bridget saw the carriage drive from the inn door with the lady alone in it. She went in and asked for Lady Foxglove's nursemaid, and was shewn into a room where Mrs. Maria was in attendance on the two children, who were eating fruit: —perhaps some of that which the poor widow had helped to gather in the morning.

"I am the widow of the man who drew your little boy out of the water, not quite a fortnight ago."

"Oh, Mrs. O'Meara!" said Maria mournfully, "I have longed for an opportunity of asking your forgiveness for all I was the cause of your suffering the first day of your poor husband's illness. That I should have been so weak and foolish—if I had but told my lady—but I was afraid of her anger."

"I must forgive all," replied Bridget. "I am not come to reproach you. But, at that time, you gave my poor husband some money."

"I ought to have seen," said Maria, "that I was robbing you of what my master would do for you."

"Patience," said Bridget: "your master was told of what had happened, and has done for me what he thinks fitting; so that I have no right to what you gave my husband, and am come to return it." So saying, she tendered a folded paper containing the money.

"Pray, pray keep it, Mrs. O'Meara. It was not for a poor servant like me to pretend to reward so great a benefit as had been done to my master; but do not make me take it again: I deserve a greater loss than that for my punishment, and"—but, looking at the children, she refrained from saying how much she suffered from the loss of her lady's confidence.

"If I had received nothing more," insisted Bridget, "I might fairly keep this; but his honour has been bountiful to me, and I ought not to be paid twice. Do not think that I have any other meaning. I have no ill-will towards you, and I try to submit to the will of God."

She then turned to the children, and gazing intently on Charles, she burst into tears. He had not before seen her, and was too young to understand what had passed; but he rose from his chair and went towards her. She parted the hair on his forehead, and, with great emotion,

impressed a kiss. She then added, looking at Arabella, "She is a beautiful little virgin! may the good God and his saints protect you both."

About an hour after her return home, the barouche stopped near the Five Houses. The out-rider dismounted, and knocked at Bridget's door.

"Here is a parcel for you," said the servant as she opened the door; "and my lady wishes to speak to you."

She snatched up Bryan in her arms, and went to the side of the carriage, without expecting much consolation from the interview;—for while at Denham, she had *not* heard that Lady Foxglove was amiable; though she had heard that Sir Cecil, even if he was somewhat strange, was an excellent man at the bottom.

"How do you do, Mrs. O'Meara?"

"I thank you, my lady," said the widow, courtesying.

"I hope you are well."

Another courtesy.

"I have brought you a trifle, which I beg of you to accept."

"I humbly thank your ladyship."

Her ladyship did not very well know what to say next. The relative position of the interlocutors was awkward to her. The sun was troublesome; and Lady Foxglove put up her parasol.

"I hope you are tolerably comfortable here?"

"As much so as I can be anywhere, my lady; and many thanks I owe his honour for what he has done for me."

"You preferred this to returning to Ireland?"

"I would be a lone woman both here and in Ireland. This is my chief comfort," she added, directing her look to Bryan.

He, utterly unconscious of the etiquette required, cried out repeatedly,—"Hobby! hobby!" extending his arms towards the horses; and, in his glee, striking his mother's straw bonnet from her face in such a manner, as to display her auburn hair, and a finely formed white forehead, that shewed her complexion, though sun-burnt, to be naturally fair. The children in the carriage were much amused to see him: they were just so much older as to be pleased with a child younger than themselves. Little

Charles shook hands with him; and Arabella also gave her hand to Bryan.

Lady Foxglove hastened to say, "Well, Mrs. O'Meara I will not detain you and your little one longer in this hot sun. Sir Cecil is gone from home for a fortnight; but I know he will come and see you on his return. Good-by."

The carriage drove off.

Bridget returned into her cottage; and again seating herself on her low chair, gave way to painful reflection. In a few minutes, she recovered herself; when Jane Allen, whose curiosity as to the results of the grand visit could no longer be restrained, came in, crying out, "Well, Biddy!—why I vow and declare you have not opened the parcel yet!"

"You may open it, if you like, Jane."

It was not necessary to repeat the permission:—"Good black bombasin for a gown," cried Jane, "and muslin for a cap; and I know not how much crape. And here is a little parcel in the larger one." She opened it, and found a very good shawl, fit to be worn either in or out of mourning; in unfolding which, a piece of paper dropt out. Bridget took it up and read, "If you do not accept this shawl from me, I shall think that you have not forgiven me. M.M."

Bridget readily apprehended that the nursemaid had sent this portion of the parcel: and inferred that, in doing so, she had not taken counsel of her lady.

Meanwhile, the putting up of poor Albert's grave-stone was an important domestic occurrence at Denham; and "excited considerable sensation in the public mind." When Sir Cecil Foxglove heard of it, he asked himself, "Now is this the act of a disconsolate widow, or the trick of a wily woman, to remind me of her wants and her claims on me?" He resolved to elucidate the doubt by a visit in person. On the week following, he called at No. 2, at the Five Houses, on a day which was, though he knew it not, a festival of the Church. Had Bridget been forewarned, she could not have been better prepared for the reception of a visitor of distinction. It was two o'clock in the afternoon: she had dined and had cleared her table; and was seated at it, with her book before her, in

her Sunday mourning dress. Her little boy, also in his mourning frock, was playing with something that served him for a toy. She opened the door to Sir Cecil, who, entering the house, inquired with kindness after her health and that of her son. She remained standing while she answered these inquiries; and, with a better judgment than that of him who asked the Prince of Wales to sit down, left Sir Cecil to do, in this respect, as seemed to him good:—that is, to be himself, as of right, the master of the house. He took a chair, and at the same time desired her to be seated. Whereupon she resumed her seat immediately. "The very behaviour," thought Sir Cecil, "for which Lord Chesterfield was adjudged by George the Second to be the best-bred man in England."

"Mrs. O'Meara," then began Sir Cecil, "I have seen the monument to your husband. I blame myself for not having thought of this myself; yet yours is the nearest and dearest right to do it. I request, however, that you will permit me to bear the expense."

"If my husband had died in his own home, and been buried among his kindred," replied the widow, "the green sod would have covered him, and never a stone would have told where he was laid; nor would it have been wanted, for his friends and neighbours would have known the place. But here, in a far distant country, the tombstone may serve to point out the place to some kind wanderer from our native land, who may offer up a prayer for the repose of his soul. Since your honour is pleased to pay the cost of it, I humbly thank you."

Sir Cecil endeavoured to escape from his predisposition to sympathy, by saying, "Then be so good as to order the bill to be sent in to me."

"It is paid, your honour."

"Indeed; then please to let me see it."

She took it out of a drawer, and gave it to him. He looked at the sum, and then presented her a bank note, which, without unfolding, she laid on the table before her, together with the bill. In this behaviour, Sir Cecil perceived a tact, which directed her at once to apprehend, and to conform to his own meaning.

He then proceeded:—"Mr. Piron has told you of the little annuity that I have engaged to allow you?"

"He has, your honour; and paid me half a year in advance, besides the year's income you were pleased to give me to begin with."

"That is all right; but my purpose is that this pension should be for your life. You are several years younger than I, and, were it not so, life is uncertain. I have, therefore, made my solicitor draw out a bond which I have signed. It binds my executor to the same payment to you during your life."

She took the folded paper, with a lowly courtesy, and laid it on the table, replying, "I desired his reverence to say how grateful I am for the provision your honour was pleased to make for me. I hope I have now leave to repeat it to yourself."

Sir Cecil wished to clear up a doubt whether his plan of keeping the widow to her own condition of life was as satisfactory to her as it appeared wise to him. He asked, therefore, "Are you contented, Mrs. O'Meara? Will this be enough for you?"

"Sure I am contented, your honour," replied the widow; "I have no desire to be above working for my living. This will be a help to me, and a provision in case of accident or sickness, and in old age, if it please God that I live to be old; since your honour is so kind as to have the thought to make it sure to me for my life."

"Well," said he, smiling, as if at the pettiness of the annual sum, "Well, you will not be able to save much for your little boy; but I will befriend him when time shall require" Then, to check her thanks, and to satisfy his suspicion, concerning the purpose of the grave-stone —for the habits of his mind hardened him against the belief that piety was her sole and simple motive—and, to end the interview by an acknowledgment which he felt to be due, he added, "I do not want that monument to your husband to remind me of my obligation to him, Mrs. O'Meara. Be assured, I will always remember you and yours."

"Your honour," she replied, "will, I hope, always have one to remind you of the service done by my poor Albert. May your own son ever be a blessing to you!"

The baronet felt this observation as a sort of comparison of the benefit conferred by himself, with the

incalculably greater benefit he had received ; and his sense of justice compelled him to admit, that if the widow had really arrived at the conclusion, that the balance of obligation was against him, such calculation was quite reasonable. Still, his pride was somewhat mortified ; and he could only reply by a gracious inclination of the head, and a civilly pronounced "I thank you."

He asked what was the book she had been reading, and she put it into his hands. It was the book given her by Abbé Piron.

"*The Imitation of Christ by Thomas à Kempis*," read the baronet. "I have heard much praise of this book, but have never yet met with it."

"It deserves all praise, your honour, for it is beautifully written ; full of humility and piety, and unction."

Sir Cecil, of course, understood the meaning of the word "unction" in its primary sense ; but he had now, for the first time, heard it applied metaphorically to a spiritual use. He was embarrassed by the consciousness of having learned something from a poor woman ; and, very courageously attempted to disguise his former ignorance from one who could not be aware of it, by observing, "like the balm of Gilead, or the precious ointment on the head of Aaron."

The equipoise of mind, assured to the widow by the habit of religious meditation, had given her some advantage over the baronet, even in the conversation on temporal concerns ; in spirituals, he perceived that he should be decidedly her inferior. Conversation is like fencing ; a steady and self-commanding position is requisite in both exercises. Sir Cecil felt this ; and that he should have been more at his ease with a lady of equal rank to his own, than with this poor woman, who, for his good, had endured so great a loss, and who bore her faculties and her fortune so meekly ; deriving consolation from a source to him unknown, or, at least, by him untried, and unapproached. He took refuge in the expedient of some good-natured attentions to little Bryan, commending his looks and his improvement since their last meeting. These words recalled a scene, wherein he had appeared as the comforter of the afflicted, and the remembrance whereof restored him to his own self-esteem. He took leave of

her, wondering at the respect wherewith she had inspired him.

He unravelled its motives; but the discovery was unfruitful to him. Oh, the world!—the world!

CHAPTER X.

One Sunday evening, in the month of September, Judith Simmons, the first fellow-labourer whom Bridget had met in the market-garden, and who had since been often employed with her, at harvest-work, on the neighbouring farm, proposed an evening walk, adding, not without a little embarrassment, that she wished to go and see her mother, who was in the workhouse, at Hampton. The proposal was agreed to by Bridget, and Judy's husband and daughter; and they all proceeded along the bank of the little river, and following it upwards for nearly a mile, came to the poor-house. At the door, was seated an aged and infirm woman, who, by the greetings of the family, was made known to the widow as the mother of Judith.

That the relatives might converse more freely together, Bridget passed into the house. Her decent widow's dress procured for her, from a matronly woman, an invitation to sit down. She did so, near a table, at which a lad of fourteen was standing, reading the Holy Bible.

"The boy has been behaving ill," said the matron, "so he is kept at home for a punishment. Old Mother Rutter might have taken *her* walk, but she is so slow, that nobody likes to go along with her, and she cannot go alone."

Bridget had the curiosity to inquire of the boy what part he was reading; and he pushed the book sullenly towards her. It seemed that the youth, deprived of all other sport, had sought for amusement where it was permitted to him, and fancied that the title of "The Song of Solomon" promised something of the sort. Bridget looked at the beginning of "The Song," and, casting down her eyes, returned the book to the lad.

It may be asserted, that this portion of the Holy Scriptures is to be interpreted spiritually. Was this youth

likely so to interpret it? If not, was the perusal of it, in its literal sense, proper and desirable for him? Those who are unwilling to affirm thus much, must admit that all parts of the sacred volume are not equally suited to the study of all persons of all ages.

Bridget O'Meara quitted the house, and joined her party at the door. Mother Rutter received her kindly, as the friend of her daughter. Bridget asked her how she liked her situation?

"Like it! who can like it?—especially an old woman, as I am. It is downright misery."

"You have plenty of food?"

"Yes, twice as much as would do for us if we lived at our own cost. But at my age, to live among people whom I cannot love, and who do not care for me, and who have no pity for my infirmities;"—and she wept aloud. After a pause, she went on with her complaints:—"Then to be obliged to keep all the rules of the house, or to be scolded like a girl; and to ask leave to go out, even when I want to see my daughter!—At threescore and ten to be obliged to ask leave!—And I sleep in a two-bedded room; in the other bed there is a widow and a widow bewitched,—one with a runaway husband; they have both brought children to the parish; but such sluts are more cared for than honest women;—some of the overseers have their own reasons. I am ashamed of talking of such folks before my granddaughter. When I kneel down to my prayers at night, they make a jest of me, and ask me if I am afraid of going to the devil?"

The poor woman was here so agitated, that Bridget thought it might be a relief to her to ask her if the inmates of the house were compelled to work, as it was called a workhouse?

"I am past work," replied the old woman; "however, I do knit stockings. As for the others, they work as little as they can, and grudgingly enough, as you may suppose; and there is a constant squabbling between them and the managers. If they wish to make the house disagreeable to them, I wonder they allow them to pretend to work at all; for it is only pretence after all. They would soon sicken, if they were obliged to be idle from morning till night; and would go and find inde-

pendent work for themselves. When people do not labour for their own profit, nothing will keep them to it but the cart-whip. Folks say that has been tried among the blacks; let them try it here: it would not, altogether, make matters much worse than they are already."

All endeavoured to console her by affectionate remonstrance; but the attempt was vain.

"Let us hope," said Bridget, "that something better may be done for you."

"I hope for nothing," replied the old woman, whom self-interest had taught to be a practical political economist. "They might, perhaps, manage their workhouses better; and they might, perhaps, give out-of-door relief on some plan which would not make the pauper better off than the hard-working man who pays the rates; but the whole system, as they call it, is rotten at bottom. The parish has set itself up in the place of husband, wife, parent, children, friends, prudence, and honesty; it has destroyed all affection in families, all kindly charity in the rich, all economy amongst ourselves. A man may idle, drink, squander away his earnings, steal, and run away from his family, but he knows that the parish will support them; and so the rich tell the wives and children of runaways, that the poor-rates come so high, that they must go to the workhouse for their share of them. I do not blame you, Judy," she added to her daughter, "you cannot help it; but if they would but leave us alone!—As it is, I hope for nothing but that it may please God to take me away, and the sooner the better."

"My dear, dear mother," Judith said, "it is, indeed, wretched; but it is our lot. It will be my turn in due time, when my husband and I are past work. It grieves me to the heart to think that I can do nothing for you."

When they had taken their leave of the disconsolate pauper, and were out of sight of the workhouse, Bridget laid her hand on Judith's arm, and emphatically referring to the last words uttered by her, cried out, "but you *can* do something to help your mother! Gracious heaven! in Ireland a child would half starve, nay, starve outright, rather than desert a parent, as is so often done in this country. You must know that your mother would prefer

any shelter with you, and the scantiest meals, to this heartless detestable roof."

"My dear Biddy, what can I do?" asked Judith, with great emotion.

"And is not your daughter going to leave you to go to service? Sure, there will be a spare room in your cottage. Take your mother home."

"My husband will never agree to it."

"Do your best to persuade him. He is a good man, and has a heart."

James Simmons and his daughter were walking at a little distance behind, and Bridget availed herself of the opportunity to urge this plan with so much of earnestness, that Judith, first from shame, then from conviction, and at length from filial affection, entered into it cordially. That we may here conclude the mention of the affair, we will state at once, that the poor old woman removed to her daughter's cottage three weeks afterwards—the parish allowing three shillings a week for her support. Mrs. Rutter was most grateful to Bridget for her interference.

"I love you as one of my own grandchildren," she said; "and if I die in peace, to you I shall owe that blessing."

On her return home from her day's work, on the evening of the following Saturday, Bridget found her three countrymen,—John Conolly and the two Moylans, father and son,—waiting for her at her door. With an agitation of mingled pleasure and pain, with joy and with tears, she brought them into her house, and an hour was passed in friendly and interesting converse. They inquired into all the particulars of her new condition, into her prospects and plans for the future; and even grieved to find that she had resolved not to return to Ireland for many years to come; though in other respects well contented with the comforts she possessed,—for such they seemed to these simple sons of poverty. That the privilege of constant labour was assured to her by her employers, appeared to them a most enviable advantage.

Nothing notable had occurred to them in their excursion into the Fens. It had been, on the whole, sufficiently

prosperous and peaceable; the details of it were pleasing to the ear of friendship; as well as the delight expressed by Conolly, that he was now on his return to his wife and children.

"But I'll be kilt and murdered entirely, Biddy," he said, "when I tell the neighbours that you are not coming back to them. Faith, but God bless you.—Good night, for it is late;—but sure we'll spend the morrow with you."

An hour before the time appointed for their reception at breakfast, Hugh Moylan, the son, knocked at the door of Bridget's cottage, and was received with the questions, "Where is your father? where is Conolly?"

"I am come, dear Biddy, to try to persuade you to return to Ireland with them."

The epithet "dear," and the anxiety evident in his looks, betrayed to Bridget at once the mode of persuasion he contemplated. She calmly waited the result.

Hugh Moylan was of the same age as Bridget; and a handsome man, of the stature and bearing so often admired in his countrymen;—of gentle disposition, and well approved for moral conduct; and, what is essential to good moral conduct in his condition—for habits of industry. Bridget might have said in all prudence, in the sense of the words of the imprudent Dido,—"that, but for her frigid and immoveable resolve, she might, perhaps, have yielded to him alone."

When they were seated, he began by excusing himself, on the ground of the evident necessity of the case, for intruding on her grief so soon after the death of Albert. He then stated that, without knowing of her engagement to Albert, he had seen her some months previous to her marriage; that he had loved her, and considered an union with her to be indispensable to the happiness of his life; but that, on being made aware of the fact that she was betrothed to another, he had forborne to make known his sentiments; had quitted the service that brought him into her neighbourhood, and had returned to Connaught; but that, when his father had received Conolly's invitation to accompany him to England, with the information that Albert and his wife were to be of the party, the thought of the dangers and difficulties she might meet with, had

prevailed over his resolution to avoid her; and he appealed to her whether, while he accompanied her as far as Denbigh, he had not so behaved to her, that she would have no suspicions that he bore towards her any other sentiments than those of a friend and relation? But that since, by the dispensation of Providence, she was now free, it was permitted to him to recur to the wish of his heart—to devote his life to her and her dear little one, to whom he would be a father. Such was the substance of his tale.

"I will wait your own time, dearest Bridget," he concluded. "I will work to maintain me, here at Grantham; or, what will be better, my father—and faith he'd be delighted to call you daughter—and our friend Conolly, will take care of you on the journey to dear Ireland"

"I have heard you to the end, my dear cousin," the widow replied; "not that I had any doubt of what my answer must be, but as a mark of the true esteem I bear you. I am very grateful for your good opinion of me, and most sorry to think that I have, at any time, been the cause to you of distress of mind. If it be possible for me to think of taking a second husband, I would not, at once, refuse your offer. But I am bound by a most solemn purpose."

"A vow?" cried he, in dismay.

"No; not a vow."

"A promise to Albert?"

"There was no need for him to ask such a promise. He told me that he wished me not to marry again, and I said what made him die in the belief that I never would. Such, dear Hugh, is my solemn purpose. Be assured by me, that no woman who loved truly her first husband ever took a second. And how could I bear to share my love for that son of my dear Albert, even with others that would have an equal claim?"

He rose from his seat in great agitation, and exclaimed, "Biddy, you only prove to me entirely the value, the precious value, of what I have lost!" Then, snatching up Bryan, he seated himself again with the child upon his knee, exclaiming, "Oh, wouldn't I be a father to thee, a loving father, if thy mother would but let me, my dear baby!" and he wept and sobbed over the child, till the

unconscious innocent gave evidence of being alarmed by his violent grief."

She went up to him, and gently taking the little one away from him, said, "Compose yourself, dear Hugh. Be, as you have been for these four years, a good and reasonable man, and seek some other—"

"Never, never, Bridget;—never, till I find another equal to you; and that will never, can never be."

"The last four years," he resumed, after a short silence spent in pondering on her words; "aye, for the last four years, it has been my duty not to think of you;—but now—"

"Look at me, Hugh," she said, interrupting him, and casting her eyes up to heaven, with an expression that struck him with awe; "I am as much the wife of Albert, as if he were still living."

A pause of some minutes ensued. He rose; opened the window to find relief by inhaling the fresh air; then returning towards her, "Once more, dearest Biddy," he said, "I cannot give you up! We will together love the memory of Albert, and the dear boy he has left you. I come too soon; you have been but two months a widow; let me come back to England next year."

"On my account, by no means, Hugh. I will always be happy to see you as now, or as the husband of one who may make you happy."

"No other can make me happy. I am without hope entirely. I will never again set foot in this land; but in the heart of Ireland, I will think on you as my angel guardian."

She drew near him, her child in her arms, and took his hand kindly, saying, "I am truly sorry to afflict you, dear Hugh."

"It is done;" he cried impetuously, pressing her hand, "it is all over. But I will be patient; and will endeavour, for the rest of my life, to make you confess that, if I have not gained you, I have, at least, not been undeserving of you."

They both wept together. After some time, Hugh said, with a faint smile, "My father will see that I am miserable, and will guess the cause why; but Conolly knows nothing about it. I will keep it as a dear secret

of my heart, known only to you and my father; and, perhaps, hereafter,"—he glanced a look at Bryan, but explained himself no further.

Moylan, the father, and Conolly, now appeared. Their breakfast was sad and silent, and John's vivacity could not make it otherwise. The father understood immediately that his son's suit had been rejected; the distress which his look betrayed on his entrance, was more than could have been occasioned by a simple delay of compliance. The son supported himself tolerably well, and joined in talk. Bridget did the honours—such things as are done in a cottage; the name is different, but the thing is the same—she did the honours, we say, with composure; and soon after the conclusion of the meal, relieved the Moylans of their constraint, by saying, that she had some private business with Conolly, relating to the family, that she would meet them at mass, and that all would return together to dinner. The father and son departed, both equally anxious, the one to hear, the other to communicate, the particulars of the preceding interview.

Bridget now gave her commissions to Conolly. To her father and mother she sent a message, such as became a loving and Christian daughter; and to her brother, the assurance of her unabated affection.

"But my own family," she said, "are very well to do; and as all my means of sending help come by Albert—and dearly-bought they are!—such as they are, they belong to Albert's father." She put five pounds into Conolly's hand, and added, "You will be here again, John, next summer, I hope. If you do not come, send a letter by some trusty person. I hope to be always able to send something, if not so much as this, to my father-in-law. I cannot tell you what to say to him from me; let it come from your own heart."

"Don't now trouble yourself, Biddy, to tell me what to say," he answered. "I have seen it all, och hone! and have felt it all too strongly. Oh, but sure I'll niver forget it!"

Both were silent for some time, from violent emotion; at length, the widow recovered her composure.

"The rest is easy," she resumed; "for the payment of our rent, sell what is on the ground; whatever may re-

main over, and all that is in the cabin, take to yourself. There may be something that may be useful. It is a poor present; but we are poor, and may give and receive poorly. Give my kind love to your wife and babies. And now, farewell, dear Ireland."

She found relief in a flood of tears; then said, "I will seek comfort at the foot of the altar of God:" and, almost convulsively, kissing her baby, the cause of her exile, she gave him to the care of her neighbour, and departed with Conolly to the chapel.

A short explanation took place between Moylan the father, and Bridget, as they returned home. He testified his respect for the motive which had induced her to refuse his son, and his hope that her little Bryan might grow up to be a compensation for all the sacrifices she was making for him.

"You would have done well in taking Hugh," he added, "but, arrah faith, if my heart doesn't bleed to say it, you have done better."

At dinner, poor John Conolly's liveliness was put to the test by the comparative silence of the rest of the party. In fact, however resigned, a less cheerful party could not well be.

"You will wait for me a little while," said John to the two Moylans, "at his honour Mr. Harrison's gate, and at the Baronet's of Denham. I will not take you to them, for it would look as if we would be asking them for something, and that would not do, as we are not in want. Let us be ten miles off, any how, before nightfall."

"You will go," said Bridget to her friends, "to the churchyard at Denham; John will shew you where"—she could not proceed.

"I will not fail," young Moylan eagerly exclaimed, "to send up my earnest prayer for one so dear to you, and so loved by us all."

The others avowed the same intention, and Conolly added, "When I get back to Athlone, I'll have mass said for him, and will give notice of it to the village. They will attend, every one of them."

The widow wept, and was comforted.

"I will come and see you again next summer, Biddy," said John; and he began the leave-taking by hearty

caresses to little Bryan, in which he was followed by the father of Hugh; and then, with still more tenderness, by Hugh Moylan. "Let him be an Irishman," he added. "Do not let his English bringing up make him forget his country."

"Sure he will be no son of mine," said Bridget, "if he does not love all those who are dear to me, both here and in our own country. Let us remember each other in our prayers," she added, "and then we will not be parted entirely."

"I will hear no more," cried Hugh; "I will go while these words are sounding in my ears."

After a pressure of Bridget's hand, unaccompanied by any phrase of taking leave, he hastened out of the house. His father and Conolly followed after a few minutes, while the widow looked after them till she saw them, at a distance, turn and wave their hands.

For some time did Bridget O'Meara weep over her child in anguish, revolving all that had passed within two short months. She then rose and took him to Jane Allen, that she might go to afternoon prayers.

"I have parted with Ireland," she mournfully said. "My friends have just left me."

"Cheer up, dear Biddy, we will all be your friends," the kind-hearted woman replied.

CHAPTER XI.

We will now, with the reader's leave, suppose it to be the first day of the year 1816, and present to him our hero —all heroes have been young—in the eighth year of his age. He is looking at George Allen at work in his shed on a long block of marble; he is dressed in a boy's jacket and trousers, of the stuff called velveteen by the tailors, a smart cap of drab-coloured cloth on his head, the black japanned front of the cap shading his lively dark eyes, and contrasting with a clear and healthy complexion; the collar, without frill, of his coarse shirt, tied with a black riband, worsted stockings, and shoes, fastened with leathern thongs. Such are the habiliments of

the son of Albert, the only earthly joy of his widowed mother.

"What is this to be, Mr. Allen?"

"A cornice for a chimney-piece, lad."

"How nicely you make the shape come out! But I will not be a stone-cutter, though it is such pretty work; I will be nothing but a gardener."

"Thou art a pretty gardener, for eating strawberries when thou art set to pick them. I know who was sent home blubbering last summer."

"I remember you told me then that picking and stealing was one and the same thing; but I never eat any without leave, and I cried then only because I was tired; and my mother gave me the key of the door, and told me to go home and go to sleep, and so I did, for I had been up from before sunrise. But you are always joking with me, Mr. Allen."

"That is because I like thee, my lad."

Allen's good-will to Bryan was about to be put to the test, for suddenly turning to a large and ornamented grave-stone, the boy cried out, "I know what these are; they are the same little angels as there are in my mother's missal, heads and no bodies; but what is that under their chins?"

"Clouds, boy, to be sure."

"Clouds! Why, now look at that poor little fellow, he seems to be crying, just as I was, and what he has under his chin is exactly like a muff, such as Madame Glover has when she walks by our house as far as the bridge and back again. How good it is of her to lend the little angel her muff this cold weather."

This was a severe critique in the very presence of the artist. Allen seized a strap that served him for a flexible rule, and half in anger, yet pleased with the playfulness of the boy, held it in menacing guise over his shoulders, holding him by the arm meanwhile.

"Oh no, do not, Mr. Allen," cried Bryan; "pray do not. If I have said any thing to displease you, do as they do at school;" and he held his hand with the palm upwards, as if to receive the ferula.

"Aye, school," said Allen; "that is what thou wantest. I will tell thy mother to send thee to school, and I

hope Mr. Puttwell will flog thee soundly for thy sauciness."

Of such ill omen was this unfortunate word—SCHOOL! There was at Grantham a foundation similar to that of Christ's Hospital in London; the boys wore the same uniform, except that they were allowed a worsted cap with a red tassel, and were not required, like those of the metropolis, to go bareheaded; neither were they required to learn Greek and Latin. They were but twelve in number, educated at an expense of funds that, under the Lancastrian method, would have taught writing and arithmetic to the whole population of Grantham. But twelve was the number stipulated by the grant of Henry VIII., who, in this way, made many of the corporations of the kingdom accomplices in his unprincipled plunder of the monasteries. The school-house stood on ground once belonging to the monastery before mentioned, but on the north side of the river, which bounded its play-ground. As an addition to his salary, the master took thirty or forty day-scholars, at quarterly pensions, amongst whom our hero was enrolled at the suggestion of Allen. "The boy goes 'sliving' about all the winter months," he said to Bridget; "give him half-a-year's schooling, he is old enough to guide a pen, and will write a good hand by the time you will want him to help you in the garden." Bryan was present, and hardly knew whether to consider this as the counsel of a friend or an enemy. Allen remarked his uncertain look, and saw that he had not forgotten the threat under the shed. "Thou *must* learn to write at some time," said he, "the sooner the better; I advise it for thy good." Bryan relied on the good faith of his mother's friend, and signified his cheerful assent.

On the Monday after the Epiphany, the Christmas holidays ended, and "school re-opened." Bryan went, not "with snail-like pace," but with rather a proud step; it was a preparation for future manhood. He took the seat assigned him at the desk, and received the first instruction how to make straight strokes. When the usher left him to his own unaided efforts, a boy opposite, who had seemed impatient for the opportunity, said, in a loud whisper, "You are an Irish bog-trotter."

"I glory in being an Irishman," retorted Bryan; "I would not, on any account, be a parish boy."

It so happened that this reproach was applicable, as the family of the boy were in the receipt of parish relief. Though the first to insult, he felt the countercheck severely. As soon as school was dismissed he came to Bryan and gave him a smart box on the ear. Man is naturally a pugnacious animal, it has been said. "A battle, a battle!" cried all the boys; and some siding with Norton, and some with Bryan, and teaching them to double their fists, an expedient in the thousand arts of hurting, in which neither was much practised, and cheering first one and then the other, the boxing was carried on to the delight of the *fancy*. Bryan, though inferior to his antagonist by one year, that is by one eighth of growth and strength, kept his ground manfully, till, on a sudden, all the boys scampered away, one of the bigger ones delaying only so long as to say to the combatants thus caught in the fact, "You will have a ride on the blue horse after dinner."

In the afternoon, Mr. Puttwell called aloud, "John Norton and Bryan—what-is-your-name? stand out;" and the two stood trembling on the floor before him. He then began: "Frederic the Great, King of Prussia, told two officers of his army who wanted to fight a duel, 'You shall fight till one of you is killed, and then I will hang the other.' Now," said Mr. Puttwell, "I am not going to kill or hang either of you, I will only flog you both; and he beckoned to the biggest of the blue-coat boys, who sat at a side of the room apart. Remonstrance, explanation, recrimination, were in vain. "I do not care who is right, or who is wrong," argued the pedagogue; "you are both of you wrong in fighting." The combatants were hoisted successively on the back of the blue boy, and the punishment was inflicted, which Bryan endured with an indignant resentment of the injustice done to him, and suffered not a cry to escape him, though he could not prevent his tears and sobs.

In the evening, he *slived* into Allen's house, and said:

"Mr. Allen, you have had your wish, I have been flogged."

"What! so soon? I hope it will do you good."

"No, it will not," said Bryan; and recapitulated the occurrence. "I shall not tell my mother," continued he, "because it would fret her; but I tell you because you will be glad to hear it."

"No, indeed," replied Allen, at once surprised and amused, and compassionating: "I am very sorry for it, and if you will be a good boy, and try to learn your writing and summing well enough to leave the school at the end of the quarter, I will persuade your mother to let you stay only three months instead of six. But how came you to call the boy a parish boy? it was very wrong of you."

"Well, I thought all English poor boys were parish boys," said Bryan.

"You blockhead," said Allen, "do you think my George there is a parish boy?"

"No, Mr. Allen, you are above people of that sort."

Allen was flattered by this superiority awarded by a judge so incompetent, and was as good as his word in shortening the duration of Bryan's slavery; who, on his part, worked double tides, and merited the reprieve by diligence.

Mr. Puttwell, too, by way of encouraging such a good beginning, of the true motive whereof he was ignorant, and urged, it may be, by some compunctious visitings, gave him a penny-piece, saying, "As long as you keep that, you will never be without money."

At the conclusion of the week, on Saturday at noon, the boys were required to give answers to questions in the catechism of the Book of Common Prayer: even those not qualified to respond were compelled to attend for their instruction. Bryan, being forewarned of this, took up his cap at the end of the proper school business, and prepared to go away. Mr. Puttwell fiercely cried out, "Stay for the catechism." Bryan turned round, saying, "I am a Catholic, sir," and effected his departure.

The fear, however, of another "bloody Monday,"—for Mr. Puttwell had the reputation of laying on the birch better than the master of the grammar-school, a praise to which he justified his claim by averring, that poor folks' boys did not feel so much as the children of the higher

orders—a repugnance to a second "ride on the blue horse," prompted a relation of the occurrence to Mr. Piron, who kindly undertook to call on Mr. Puttwell to learn the intentions of the master, as to insisting on attendance at catechism. With ostentatious professions of liberality, Bryan's excuse was admitted as amply satisfactory, and "no notice taken."

On the first of April, a boy called to Bryan to come to the bank of the river, which, as has been said, bounded the play-ground—"Come and see a fish with a worm hanging out of his mouth." Bryan stooped over the bank, the boy cried out, "April fool!" and pushed him into the stream. He scrambled out easily, for the water was not deep, and, having been brought up with a dread of wet clothes, as the probable cause of his father's last illness, he ran home immediately to put on his Sunday apparel, the same as that of every day, only by one year newer. His mother returned with him to the school to explain the cause of his late appearance. The master said she had done very right, and that he would punish the boy who had treated her son so ill. She took her leave.

Puttwell led Bryan to his own desk, and inquired the name of the boy who had pushed him into the water.

"I had rather not tell you, sir, if you please."

"Why not?"

"Because, sir, perhaps you would flog him."

"Well, he deserves it."

"He will not like it the better for that, sir."

"But do you not wish to be revenged on him for using you ill?"

"No, sir."

"Why not?"

"Because I am a Christian."

This evidence of Christianity had all the effect of novelty upon the hearers. The surprise of Mr. Puttwell would have been still greater, had he known that the boy, whose name was concealed by Bryan, was the same who had gratuitously provoked him to battle the first day of his school. But Bryan had benefited by the precepts and example of his mother.

He used the word *Christian* as synonymous with *Catholic*. He had a confused notion that the former term was referrible to morality, the latter to faith; and having

remarked, or been told of, the non-observance by people of this country of their own appointed days of fasting and abstinence, the neglect of confession, even by the sick and dying; the horror of all at the sign of the cross; he had fancied himself justified in appropriating successively both the terms. His quarter of a year ended with the week, and he quitted school.

The next Sunday, after mass, Mr. Piron asked, "How old are you, Bryan?"

"I shall be eight years old next June, sir."

"Children never tell how old they are, but always how old they will be," remarked the Abbé.

"I only wish to be older, sir, to be able to do something for my mother."

"Will you do something for me, Bryan?"

The boy replied by looking up at the priest with a countenance expressing both a readiness to do his pleasure and anxiety to know it.

"You remember Edward Stephens was my clerk when you first came to chapel at four years of age?"

"Yes, sir."

"And that his brother Thomas succeeded him?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, Thomas is to leave Grantham in less than a twelvemonth to be apprenticed to a trade, and I want you to learn to serve at mass, that you may succeed him."

Bryan immediately kneeled on one knee and kissed the hand of the priest, but without uttering a word.

Mr. Piron was touched by the alacrity of devotion thus indicated; he paused a few minutes to sympathize with the joy that beamed in Bryan's face. He then went on:—"You are almost too young—"

"No, indeed, sir, I am not."

"Be still, *mon cher;* but you will have nothing to do for the present, but to learn to join in the responses. You will be on the Gospel side till Thomas leaves me; you will then pass to the Epistle side; and as by that time our new chapel will be finished, I shall wish to continue to have two clerks, and will desire the parents of William Wrag to let him take the place you will have quitted.

On the following Sunday Bryan took his place on the left hand of the priest. After the mass, as he was folding up his surplice, in which he was not so ready as his

brother clerk, who had left the room, one of the congregation, regarding him as an official personage, gave him a message to Mr. Piron. Bryan went up-stairs to the Abbé, and, opening the door, found him conversing with a French gentleman, in their own language. He went in, however, shut the door, and waited near it. Mr. Piron replied at some length to his countryman, who then took his leave. When Bryan had delivered his message, Mr. Piron said to him, "You must learn the responses of the first psalm."

"Indeed, sir, I had learned them as well as the rest, but when you said, '*Introibo ad altare Dei*,' and I had to say, '*Ad Deum qui lætificat juventutem meam*,' I thought the words were meant for myself, and I had such a throbbing here," laying his hand on his heart, "that I could not go on."

"You are hardly *juvenis* yet, Bryan," said Mr. Piron, much affected; "but such sentiments will 'make joyful' every period of your life—may God preserve them to you!"

Bryan still stood and lingered. Mr. Piron looked at him, as asking what more he had to say. Bryan had no English *mauvaise honte:* so he felt this look as an encouragement.

"What a pretty language, sir, the French is. While you, sir, and that gentleman were talking, I listened—I could not understand, sir; so there was no harm in listening; and it seemed so soft and so lively, not rough and crackling like English, but so smooth and easy. I wish I could learn French;"—and his downcast eye seemed to imply, that, for the moment, he regretted his low estate.

Mr. Piron was, by this time, entirely disposed to favour the boy, and said, "Come here—let me see—yes, on Wednesday, at six in the evening, and we will try." The visit occasioned an order for its repetition, and in the following week, three lessons were given.

Mr. Piron, already convinced of the good dispositions of Bryan's heart, became satisfied that the talents of his mind were worthy of cultivation, and resolved on giving effect to a plan for his future benefit. The nature of his claims on Sir Cecil Foxglove must depend on the sort of

education which he might receive ; if when more advanced towards manhood, he should be qualified only for a humble and laborious condition of life, Sir Cecil would there leave him ; as, indeed, he had intimated in his communication on the subject. But if Bryan should make some progress in literature of a higher order, the baronet might be induced to carry on the work. Mr. Piron resolved, therefore, to take Bryan into his own house, as a poor boy under his protection, to board with his housekeeper, and to occupy the garret which had first given him a lodging at Grantham after the death of Albert ; thus to be more immediately in the way of instruction, and, at all times, under his superintendence. This mode of doing good is by no means unusual among the Catholic clergy in England, and perhaps in other countries.

He explained the plan and its motives to his mother; adding, " You need not be left alone, if you like to take, in the place of your son, the granddaughter of your late friend, the Widow Blow. Mr. Wrag, who acts as her guardian, has applied to me to find some one who may take care of her. She has a little property, left by her father, that will bring in about six pounds a year : this sum, of course, you will receive ; you will lose the wages of your son's labour, and will gain what may be earned by the little girl, who is, I believe, a year older than Bryan. You will still have the expense of clothing him ; for I fear," said he, smiling, " that in undertaking for his board, I am committing an act of imprudence, my finances considered."

After signifying, in most grateful terms, her acceptance of the Abbé's proposals, Bridget added, " But it will not be right, sir,"—she had left off saying " your reverence," —" for me to be paid for the board of little Mary Beckett, while my own son is fed at your cost."

" You will have to clothe the child," observed the Abbé ; " but to relieve you from all scruple, and from the embarrassment of riches, if you find her work as profitable as your son's, you may make over the surplus to the chapel fund."

The Abbé had also in view, when Bryan should be lodged with him, to make him an amanuensis ; for he had learned to write a good plain roundhand. Now, the Abbé

had some MSS. of his own composition soon after his arrival in England; but with so many corrections of Gallicisms detected by farther study of English, as to be almost illegible: these he intended that Bryan should transcribe. He was also employed in translating from the French some very beautiful biographical memoirs, ere long to be published for the benefit of the all-absorbing chapel fund. In this translation, he had fallen into more French idioms than in his original writings; for the presence of the French text had prevented him from thinking in English, and this last manuscript, he said, was more *éclaboussé* than the former. Here was employment and improvement in store for our young hero.

The greatest difficulty experienced by the Abbé in this arrangement was in preparing the mind and deportment of Mrs. Martha. Already she began to calculate on help in her menial service.

"He is not, and is not to be considered by you, Martha, or by any one," insisted the Abbé, "as retained for any domestic work. I shall receive money on his account; and, moreover, must not run the risk of being called on to pay any tax, a tax with a great B annexed to it."

Thus Bryan, designated by the benevolent Abbé "my *protégé*, my pupil, my secretary," by his mother and by himself as his clerk, by the people of Grantham (for in a little town he was important enough to be noticed) as the French Priest's Irish boy, and by Mrs. Martha, when she dared, as "the lad that runs on my errands," became an inmate at Mr. Piron's.

The Abbé had given to his housekeeper no intimation of his views in this measure; the slightest hint, he was aware, would have laid them at the mercy of conjectures, and surmises, and interpretations. Bryan was not yet of an age to comprehend these views. He felt great grief at leaving his mother, and was pacified only when his request was granted that he might spend the whole of every Sunday with her.

The Abbé adopted the plan of teaching him the Latin and French as cognate languages, by one and the same course of lectures, and drew up a scheme or table of the declensions of both, which shewed, at one view, their resemblance and difference. Bryan, although his avocations

were numerous, and his attention by no means unremitting, learned the two languages as quickly as our school-boys, even those who make some progress, are able to learn one of them; while the task of copying the MS. under the eye of Mr. Piron, taught him orthography and punctuation, and extended, nay even elevated, his colloquial vocabulary; insomuch, that Jane Allen said to him, "Now thou art a clerk, thou usest such hard words, there is no understanding thee."

His mother's Irish accent, Mr. Piron's French tones, and Mrs. Martha's dialect of the Midland Counties, with all of which he was now conversant in their turn, had a curious influence on his manner of speaking. Had he heard but one of these, he would no doubt have learned it by imitation; but this confusion of tongues hindered the predominance of any one of them in his mode of utterance, which to any not very critical observer was completely that of good company. Thus the blending and mixture of all colours is said to produce the white.

The walls of the chapel were already carried up to their full height, extending along the north side of the little garden in front of the priest's house, and joining to the gable end of it, so that a door from the room formerly used as a chapel entered on the sanctuary. The door for the people was within the rails of the garden; a pavement from the gate conducted to it.

The building was completed a little before the feast of St. Michael and all Angels; it was dedicated under their invocation. The week preceding the opening of it, Bryan was most busy and happy in cleaning and setting all in order. The altar was removed to its place; a small circular window, high above it, left room for an altar-piece; and this was supplied by an Italian artist of the congregation. It was a copy, on a large scale, of a picture, by one of the Caracci, representing the scene of the Crucifixion, and the behaviour of the penitent and impenitent thief. The joyful hope that, in spite of bodily torture, animated the countenance of the former, the sullen incredulity and despair of the latter, the dignified and composed look of charity in the chief personage: these the most important and striking features of the admirable original, had been rendered by the copyist faithfully and

skilfully. The picture was borne to its place, and when it was suspended, Bryan clapped his hands with a delight that augured well for the impression of the piece on pious minds.

Nor will we omit to mention, that George Allen brought a vase for holy water: he would accept nothing for it; he had begged the bit of marble from his master, and wrought it out after his day's work. "I cannot be doing wrong, sir," he said to Mr. Piron; "that boy's mother is such an excellent woman." Bryan, gratified in his inmost soul, led Allen to the place where the vase was to be fixed, near the entrance, between two boxes, inscribed respectively, "for the chapel," "for the poor."

Mr. Piron made the subject of his picture the text of his first sermon. "Eighteen centuries, sixty generations have passed away, and the disgraceful doom of three malefactors is portrayed as the scene wherein was consummated the mystery of redemption. He in the centre, though about to "make his grave with the wicked," exercises the prerogative of the Lord of life. On either hand, the pious and the impious behold a mirror, wherein their own sentiments are reflected; the countenance of the one is irradiated with love and confidence; that of the other affects us with terror and pity. Which of the two will you wish to be, when that "to-day, the joy of the penitent, the agony of the impenitent, shall arrive..." &c.

Two, of three old ladies belonging to Mr. Piron's flock, who lived together, waiting for a happy death, had, to all human judgment, obtained their desire, Each of them had given, during her lifetime, a hundred pounds to be employed in the building of a chapel. They did not bequeath this money by will, for it would be subject to a legacy duty, or perhaps forfeited to the king, as being left for superstitious uses. This sum had first encouraged Mr. Piron to begin the erection; his congregation contributed liberally according to their means; but Mrs. Craig, a cousin of Lady Foxglove, widow of a Scotch Catholic; an elderly gentleman and his wife, who had given up their country-house to their newly-married son; these, with Mr. Harrison, were the only persons of independent fortune who were members of it.

A stranger passing through Grantham, after attending at mass, called Bryan to him:—

"Do you live in the priest's house?" he said.

"Yes, sir."

"Give this letter to him; and, here, can you read Latin?"

"I am learning it, sir."

"Take this little book for yourself," giving him a little prayer-book bound in black with gilded leaves, entitled, '*Celeste Palmetum.*' On a blank leaf of the book was written, '*Ora pro benefactoribus.*' The letter contained a twenty-pound bank note. He appeared not again at Grantham.*

The congregation of Mr. Piron had lately been much augmented: this is to be understood, however, relatively to its small number, and Bridget had herself been the cause of bringing back more than one strayed soul. The pauper-mother of Judith Simmons,—paupers *have* souls—felt so strongly her obligation to Bridget for removing her from the workhouse to her daughter's home, that she desired to understand the principle that prompted so much compassion, and became favourably disposed towards what she now, for the first time, discovered to have been the ancient faith.

Bridget, after some conversations on the subject, brought to her the widow Blow, one of the same age nearly as Mrs. Rutter herself, and better qualified, as Bridget said, to explain the misapprehensions, on the subject, prevalent in this country. The presence of the widow O'Meara was, nevertheless, always insisted on by Mrs. Rutter.

This latter explained to her grandson the motive of this arrangement: she had found a strong presumption in favour of the religion of both these persons, from the circumstance, that, born four hundred miles apart, and educated at the interval of forty years, they yet agreed on every point. Young James Simmons reported the argument to Bridget, who observed to him that the same

* The description of the chapel accords with that built by the author at Lincoln. This last incident also occurred to him.

was true of Signor Corsini, the Italian artist, and of Raphael, his workman. The young man said he would try an experiment on these two men, natives of Rome and Milan. This succeeded according to the averment of Bridget; and from that moment, James Simmons requested the instruction of Mr. Piron in Catholic doctrine. He was obliged to quit the service of Lady Hurston, and went to London for five years, but returned, and was now placed with Mrs. Craig.

The conversion of her son and of her mother operated on Judith Simmons, in spite of her caustic humours, and the daring discontent and indifference professed by her. She yielded to the entreaty of her mother on her death-bed: and, with her husband, a man of good dispositions, a clear and disinterested reasoner, was reconciled to the Church by the ministry of Mr. Piron.

Many other conversions and changes in the poor families to whom we have before referred, had also taken place; but to them, we need not now more particularly allude.

CHAPTER XII.

In the third winter of Bryan's abode with Mr. Piron, Mrs. Martha died, in the sixty-ninth year of her age. Death in the house caused no alarm to Bryan; it did not give rise to a new train of thought; it confirmed the reflections that had been habitual to him from the first development of his reasoning faculty. He attended the funeral of Martha; and the character of her successor added much to his domestic comfort.

Anastasia, who had lived with the three old ladies, of whom two may be regarded as the principal founders of the church at Grantham, had, at the time of their death, made application to Mr. Piron, saying that she would engage in no other service if she might look forward to the place of housekeeper to the priest. "In that situation, sir, I may keep the three evangelical counsels. I will never marry,"—she was then twenty-five years old,—"poverty and obedience are my lot. A vow is useless, if

I keep my purpose; worse than useless, if I should desire to depart from it; the dress of the poor has been the habit appointed by the founders of religious orders; charity alone shall draw me out of my inclosure."

The devotion of Anastasia, or Stasshy, as her name was abbreviated, was, in a high degree, seraphic. It rose far above that fear of the Lord which is the beginning of wisdom, but, as has been well observed, is only the beginning, into the way of contemplation and of union. But this was concealed under an unassuming and cheerful exterior. She was respected by Mr. Piron; Bryan looked up to her with affectionate reverence. Eighteen months in the society of Stasshy had a beneficial influence on the rest of his life. At the end of that time, he quitted the house of Mr. Piron.

The Abbé had rejected, scornfully, the permission to re-enter France, accorded by an authority to which he could not conscientiously submit. He called Napoleon "a little rascal, who had made himself great by mounting a throne that did not belong to him." On the restoration of the Bourbons, Mr. Piron purposed to return; but the building of his chapel detained him for a while, and the unsettled state of the royal government made him wait still longer. The account he received relative to the affairs of religion in his native land induced him, at length, to limit his wishes to a visit of one year, that he might see and take leave of those of his family and friends whom time had spared, before he should return to end his days in England. The assassination of the Duke of Berry terrified him; but the royal power still survived; the pregnancy of the widow sustained the hopes of the partisans of royalty, who all repeated her words, "*c'est impossible que je fasse une fille;*" and the Abbé Piron resolved to share in the festivities on the birth of the heir to the crown.

About Whitsuntide in this year, 1820, the justly celebrated, the truly venerable Vicar Apostolic of the district, gave the sacrament of confirmation at Grantham to Bryan and his companion in the service of the chapel, William Wrag, and to several other young people and converts. Mr. Piron profited by this episcopal visitation, to make an arrangement for his twelvemonth's absence;

and the bishop engaged to place another priest in his house during that space of time. All was now settled; but what was to be done with Bryan? The Abbé had made Mr. Harrison the confidant of his ulterior views; and now consulted him on the present difficulty. He came to Mr. Piron's house for the purpose of examining Bryan. "What progress have you made in your learning, Bryan, during the four or five years you have been with Mr. Piron?"

"I cannot judge, sir. I hope Mr. Piron is not discontented with me."

"Will you let me judge?"

"If you will be pleased to take that trouble, sir."

He brought a French and Latin author, and while he translated passages from each, Mr. Harrison paid great attention not only to the style in which he rendered them, but to his manners, his countenance, and to all that might enable him to form an opinion of his mental and moral qualities.

A difficult sentence occurred. Bryan, without being abashed or mortified, looked up to Mr. Harrison, "I cannot make it out, sir." It was explained to him, and Bryan, with simplicity and good sense, returned thanks, as if a favour had been conferred upon him. In conclusion, Mr. Harrison took up one of the books, and, pointing to a page, said, "Read that to yourself, and then read it aloud to me." The trial succeeded; after the recitation, Mr. Harrison said, "You need not translate it; I perceive you understand it; go, and send Stasshy to me."

On her appearing, he asked, "What do you think of that boy, Anastasia?"

"I can think nothing but good of him, sir. You can judge of his piety by his behaviour as clerk."

"What is his temper?"

"Something too lively and noisy for such a house as this, sir."

"Is he ever out of humour?"

"I have never seen him so but twice, sir; last summer and lately, when the two cousins of the Kellys were on their road to get harvest work in the fens; he had been spending the evening with them at his mother's, and he

came home almost in an agony of rage and grief. I asked him if he had any bad news of his relations; 'No,' said he, 'they are all well; but Ireland! Ireland!' and then he cried out, 'If it were the will of God!—but all this must be contrary to his will.' I had much ado to pacify him."

This trait of precocious patriotism amused Mr. Harrison, who, after some more inquiries and satisfactory answers, dismissed Anastasia, telling her to send Bryan to him again.

"What do you mean to do with yourself when Mr. Piron leaves Grantham?"

"I am to go to Mr. Cameron's, sir; if I behave well there for a year, he says he will take me as an apprentice."

"Have you mentioned this to Mr. Piron?"

"It would not be right, sir, for me to speak of it, till Mr. Piron tells me that I am to leave him."

Their conference was carried on in the room formerly used as the chapel. Mr. Harrison opened the door that led into the sanctuary, and taking Bryan's arm, said, "Let us pray, both of us, before the altar, for a short space of time." When he returned into the room, he said, "Bryan, what was the subject of your prayer?"

"I prayed, sir, that your prayer might be heard."

After a pause, Mr. Harrison resumed, "You shall go home and live with me as my companion for a year or two, and I will then send you to college. I cannot promise that you will be a happier man; but it is our duty to follow the path that Providence seems to mark out for us."

On the octave of the festival of St. Peter and St. Paul, Mr. Piron left Grantham, and Mr. Harrison took Bryan, now entered into his thirteenth year, and dressed as became his new situation, to his house at Willoughby. They entered the dining-room together; a supper tray was brought in; a friendly conversation took place; and Bryan seemed more at his ease than could have been expected.

"I would not propose any terms, sir," said he, smiling, "because I relied on your generosity when I should be under your roof. I have but two requests to make,—that

I may continue to serve at mass, and may spend the Sundays with my mother"

"The new priest," replied Mr. Harrison, "will no doubt be glad of your help; your second request does you too much honour to be refused."

Soon after nine o'clock, Mr. Harrison said, "At your age, man requires a great deal of sleep, and we breakfast early. Come, I will do the honours of my house to my new guest."

He led the way up-stairs. At the sight of a carpeted and curtained sleeping-room, with a tent-bed with dimity fringed furniture, a white cotton counterpane, and the usual adjuncts of a toilette in a bachelor's apartment, Bryan, who had hitherto suppressed the emotion which, notwithstanding his seeming composure, must be supposed to have agitated him, could control himself no longer; but, seating himself at the foot of the bed, he burst into a flood of tears.

Mr. Harrison, of course, understood the state of his feelings; and, as a matter of course, only asked, "What is the matter?"

"Oh! sir, my mother; my mother! I did not know that she was poor, at least I did not think of it till now."

"Well," said Mr. Harrison, "will she sleep the worse because you have these little fineries?"

"Oh no, sir; I know what joy it is to her that I am here with you."

"Well; and will you yourself sleep the worse for them?"

"Indeed and indeed, sir, I shall."

"Well; you will be used to them in time, and think nothing of them; say your prayers, and go to bed. To-morrow night we will say them together; but to-night, I thought you were tired." Bryan had, by this time, recovered himself; taking Mr. Harrison by the hand respectfully, but at the same time smiling archly in his face, he said, "Well, sir, good night, and may God forgive you."

Mr. Harrison, pleased with this playful symptom of restored tranquillity of mind, bade him good night, and left him to repose, which the perturbation of his mind rendered, for some time, unattainable.

The next morning, Sir Cecil Foxglove called, and

began what he signified, by a look to Mr. Harrison, to be intended as a trial of Bryan. "Are you not very glad to have left Mr. Piron's," he said.

"No, Sir Cecil, by no means."

"What! not glad to be here?"

"I hope there is no inconsistency in saying that I am very happy to be with Mr. Harrison."

"Why; here you are a parlour guest."

"If I am in any the least degree fitted to be the companion of Mr. Harrison, it is to Mr. Piron that I am indebted for it. I used to be with him three or four hours in the evening in winter, and in the morning in summer."

"But you had a great deal to do, at the Abbé's."

"I copied his manuscripts, and I then said my lessons, and received his instructions. I was besides, what I hope still to be, as far as the distance permits, a clerk in the chapel."

"But are you not sorry to be so far from your mother?"

"Mr. Harrison has the goodness to give me leave to pass every Sunday at her house."

"What! in that fine blue coat and buff waistcoat?"

Sir Cecil knew nothing of the usages of the class to which Bridget and her son belonged. They who are obliged to wear a coarse and soiled working dress on the week-days, are, on that account, the more anxious to be well dressed on Sunday. "I shall be taken for one of them," said Bryan.

"But they who know you, what will they say to your fine clothes?"

"They will give me joy at having so kind a friend as Mr. Harrison."

"But what will you do for that friend?"

"Any thing and every thing, to prove my gratitude for all his goodness to me."

The baronet instantly changed his supercilious tone for one of condescension and kindness; he took Bryan by the hand:—"It is fortunate that your friends did not consult me beforehand on their plans in regard to you; I should probably have given very bad counsel. If you have virtue, prudence, and application, you will make us the best return. I say *us*, for I too am your friend." The youth bowed, not ungracefully, for the gesture indicated strong

feeling, as he said, "I have always been taught to respect you as such, Sir Cecil"

The baronet remained for some time longer, and had almost the air of intending his visit for Bryan; who modestly abstained from joining in the conversation, except by his looks, in which Sir Cecil observed an attentive curiosity, with an occasional embarrassment when any thing was spoken of which he could not well comprehend; and, more than once, took occasion to explain to him the bearings of what was said. At his departure, he again shook hands with Bryan. "I shall be glad to see you at Denham," he said; and these few words placed our hero on an entirely new footing with Sir Cecil Foxglove.

In effect, during the four years that Bryan lived with Mr. Harrison, they made an annual visit of some days about the time of Christmas. Lady Foxglove treated Bryan with distant civility; but her children, who as yet "asked not of interest whom to love or hate," found much to be pleased with in the vivacity, the acuteness, the amiable disposition, of Bryan. Charles Foxglove was indeed four years his senior, and returning, as a great boy, from Eton, and afterwards from Cambridge, assumed the privilege of superior age; but Arabella, little more than one year older, continued to admit Bryan as her playfellow; and in the winter evenings, the young man could not refuse to be the companion of their amusements; and he was not unfrequently surprised to meet in Bryan a quickness of apprehension equal to his own, and a judgment by far more correct; for the religious principle enabled Bryan to form just opinions; while the want of it in Charles, if it had not perverted the moral sense, had weakened and disturbed its innocence.

Mr. Harrison, a solitary bachelor, leading a country life, was so much soothed and gratified by the society and affectionate attentions of Bryan, that he delayed, as long as he could, his departure for college. He excused himself by telling Bryan, "The progress you have made in your studies, will secure you admission into the third or fourth class of the college; so that no time is lost, as your education will conclude at the same period as if you went earlier. Besides, the studies there followed are too

contracted. General literature, authors in modern languages, even the writers of our own nation are unknown to many students of high reputation in our universities; and the Catholic colleges adhere too much, from respect to antiquity, to a system obsolete for the age. Here, my dear Bryan, you devote your time to varied study, you form your taste, you enlarge your mind."

"And I have the benefit, sir, of your direction and assistance," said Bryan, willing also to put off the evil day.

But that day could be put off no longer. Bryan completed his sixteenth year, and it was announced to his mother that he was to be sent to college: that he was to return home,—that is, to Mr. Harrison's,—only for one month's vacation in the alternate years.

"It is for your good, my son," she exclaimed, "and I submit; but I have no more to do in England,—I will not stay here to feel that you can no longer come near me I will return to Athlone, and live with the father and sister of my husband."

And she carried her purpose into execution.

We have passed over, almost in silence, thrice seven years in the life of Bridget, in the hope of obtaining the pardon of the fastidious, for the details of the beginning of her career in England. A toilsome, penurious, obscure existence, offers few occurrences worthy of being particularly noted; but the spirit with which she bore her state is beyond all praise and all retribution, but that bestowed by Him to whose service she had devoted herself. She knew the value of her own soul; she considered the length of eternity; she endured her absence from her native land; for heaven was the country of her ultimate hope; she complained not of the privations of poverty; for she was rich in supernatural consolation. Her son had grown up under her eye, improving in intelligence, and adopting with cheerful and affectionate readiness the principles she instilled into him. During the years that he had passed with his two patrons, she had seen him at least weekly, and anticipated his virtuous manhood with a mother's joy, augmented and confirmed by the approbation of his friends.

But when, in his sixteenth summer, he was to be sent

far away from her; when she could no longer watch over his progress; could no longer impart those counsels which, aided though he was by other means of improvement, his filial piety had rendered to him most persuasive and instructive in the paths of duty, the mother prepared to leave him till his future destiny should be, in some sort, settled. She had been made acquainted, by annual visiters from Ireland, of the changes which time had brought with it; Albert's father had been long a widower, and had continued to receive an annual remittance from her; he had taken possession of the cabin in which she had first lived with Albert; his daughter took care of him. Bridget had determined to share in this labour of love.

"Come with me, my son," had she said, "and help me to take leave of the spot where your father is buried;" and they went together to the churchyard at Denham.

"Albert," she said, addressing the unconscious mould, but nothing doubting that his spirit heard her; "I have thus far done my duty. Continue to pray for your faithful widow, and for this dear pledge of our love."

She embraced her son; and tears of more than earthly affection gushed from the eyes of both.

Bryan led his mother to the Hall, that she might take a grateful leave of her benefactor. Sir Cecil received her with kindness; he himself said with respect. Lady Foxglove behaved, like the wife of a baronet to a woman of low degree. Arabella was a mute but intelligent witness of the scene.

But wherefore linger to describe the affectionate and grateful farewells of the lonely widow to those who had been to her most kind friends, or judicious benefactors? why attempt to describe the parting struggle of the mother and her son?

Mr. Harrison took Bryan towards his prison in the North, as the youth called it, through Matlock, Buxton, and Harrowgate; but neither nature, nor art, nor gay society, had any charm for him. He was disconsolate at parting from his mother, and in the anticipation of losing the company of his indulgent friend.

After a residence of two years, he returned to Willoughby.

"The Denham family are absent on the Continent;" said Mr. Harrison; "you will pass but a dull time here; let us take a tour;" and they went to Malvern, Cheltenham, Clifton, and the beautiful city of Bath; making a circuit on their return, to visit the two famous universities.

"But it is vacation time," said Bryan; "the colleges are empty."

"And when full," said Mr. Harrison, "with what are they filled? I know them but too well."

In the fourth year of Bryan's collegiate life, some days before the commencement of vacation, Mr. Harrison came to the college gate in his open carriage, attended by his servant on horseback, as in their former tour.

"You can make up your package in half an hour, Bryan," he said; "we will go to Edinburgh and the Highlands of Scotland, and return by the lakes of Westmoreland."

"Return here, Sir!" said Bryan. "I have finished my humanities: may I not return with you?"

"Not yet, Bryan. I make you all the amends in my power."

The tour was delightful, the horses were light and fit for riding; a spare saddle was in the carriage, and they took their rides, as in their former journey, from the points at which they made any stay.

"But all this is an inadequate compensation for two years more in college," said Bryan.

"Hear me then: the winter of the second year shall be spent in Italy; we will see Rome together."

"Then, Sir, I will be contented."

He came back to Willoughby in the ensuing summer, and visited at Denham Hall; he was now entered into his twenty-second year, and it was five years since he had seen Arabella. She thought him awkward; he thought her haughty; it was at least something that each thought the other a subject worthy of observation and mutual criticism. When, after six months spent in France and Italy, he again presented himself at Denham, Arabella found that Mr. O'Meara was much improved, and he found that Miss Foxglove's manner was much more gracious than before.

An undefined sentiment had arisen in the mind of each,

which, by possibility, had some influence on the fastidiousness testified by her in the choice of a partner for life, and on the heroic resolve adopted by him to devote his life to redress the wrongs of Ireland. But Bryan returned to college for six months to finish his philosophy. Perhaps, his philosophy would have been sooner finished had he remained at Denham.

His tour on the Continent, short as his stay and rapid as his course had been, contributed much to the development of his character. His thought had taken a wider range than had been permitted by a life of rural seclusion or collegiate uniformity. He had frequented varied society, and in Italy particularly, had attended those assemblies so sedulously prepared to attract and gratify the several flights of travellers from the different countries of Europe, and even the transatlantic children of the old world. By conversing with men whose modes of thinking were diverse and contradictory, he learned to rest his own opinions on sure grounds of rational conviction: what he had taken on trust was proved and examined.

Nor was this all. Uncertain as he was of his future lot in life, accustomed as he had been to the lowest, yet feeling himself equal to the highest condition, he framed to himself a rule of moral conduct. To obtain this unparalleled and uncommon advantage, that his actions should not be the result of impulse, but be steady and uniform in their direction, he took a just estimate of human life: he weighed it in the "balance of the sanctuary;" he regarded it as a portion only of his existence, in which, if happiness were granted to him, he would enjoy it thankfully, not thoughtlessly: if any share of worldly prosperity, he would use it temperately, not selfishly: that if he were again to be consigned to the condition to which he was born, he would endure it patiently, nay cheerfully; since such is the lot of the great bulk of the inhabitants of this globe, whom civilization has rescued from the almost brutal ignorance of savage life: a few only excepted, whom he pitied for the delusion, the selfishness, the vanity, the false desires, the unworthy dispositions inspired by wealth.

These high thoughts gave a dignity, a seriousness to his manners, that tempered his natural vivacity without

trenching on his cheerful humour, or impairing his benevolent propensity to give pleasure to others.

Such was the young man whom Arabella Foxglove admired, because she had the sense to understand his merit, —a merit recommended by what cannot be a matter of indifference in such a judgment,—a prepossessing exterior. But the evidently immeasurable distance of their worldly circumstances, and the supposed destination of Bryan to the ecclesiastical state in the Catholic church, had made of her admiration a reasonable unimpassioned preference. Any, even the slightest tendency to an affection, such as might be entertained by her for one with whom an union was possible, could not be even suspected by herself.

Bryan, on the other hand, returned to his college, pursued his philosophical studies, and thought of Arabella only as a "delightful vision," an aerial being, a creation of the fancy, whose substantial possession he could not promise to himself without forfeiting all claim to be regarded, even by himself, as in the enjoyment of his right senses. He was inclined to murmur; but even this, he saw was folly.

Thus did he comply with the wishes of his friend, Mr. Harrison, in extending, to its utmost period, his residence in college; for after the current half-year, he could remain there no longer, unless in the character of a theological student; and into that class of students, he had finally resolved not to enter. His travels and stay on the Continent had given him a greater insight into the affairs of the world, a more lively hope from their varied chances, a fuller reliance on the influence of the character of an individual; and he could not discard the hope that, by some unforeseen combination of circumstances, he might hereafter aid the cause of his oppressed and beloved country; beloved because oppressed. Patiently, and in diligent application to study, and in an endeavour to obtain a knowledge of passing events, he continued to the term of his liberation from his monastic abode; resolved then to breathe the air of his native hills, and with his brother peasants, invoke "the mountain Nymph, sweet liberty."

CHAPTER XIII.

If Sir Cecil Foxglove did not love his lady, the fault was, evidently, his own. No one presumes to blame the wife in such a case. He had promised to love her: it was his duty to love her: why did he not do his duty? So she reasoned; and so reasoned all:—who, of course, knew her better than did her husband.

"I will, positively, not have more than twelve to sit down to table, Sir Cecil," said Lady Foxglove to her lord.

"Positively is a very useful word: but, in the present case, of no avail, since the invitations are sent out; and if the people choose to come, we cannot send them away."

"It is your own fault, Sir Cecil. Why did you ask Harrison, and that French Abbé?"

"I rode past Harrison's house; and seeing him in his grounds, would not be so ceremonious as to let him receive the note without telling him of it."

"Mr. Harrison would be a delightful guest, if silence were all that is wanted," said the lady: "he contributes so very much to the charms of conversation!"

"You do him justice—contrary, perhaps, to your intention: for though he talks but little, no man sees, hears, or understands better than he: and it is delightful to pass in review with him afterwards in private, all that has been said, meant, and felt in mixed company."

"It is well if he is amusing *after* the party," said the lady. "But why the Abbé?"

"I went to Grantham on business, and called on him to hear his opinion of the news we have just received of the revolution at Paris."

"And what is his opinion?"

"You may suppose it, royalist as he is:—but an honest, and most benevolent man nevertheless. However, give me your list."

The lady had been scrawling with a pencil the names of the personages of her intended dinner-party. As she was seated at her ease on a sofa near an open window, she would not give herself the trouble to rise: but, ex-

tending her arm, held the paper between her finger and thumb.

"Why should I rise to fetch it," said Sir Cecil, "rather than you to give it me?"

She vouchsafed to him a look of matrimonial complacency; and threw the paper on the table near him. Having conned it over, he exclaimed, "The Lord deliver me from a neighbourhood! Not one of these that has an idea of any thing beyond the limits of the county, except Hawke; who will never be chosen to represent it in Parliament, because he has more sense than the electors. And you have also put down that intolerant and intolerable Archdeacon Fullarton!"

"You have known most of them for these thirty years," said the lady.

"I have; and am more and more tired of them. Do let us go abroad again. Our two winters in the South of France and Italy were the most agreeable portion of my life. I think with pleasure on all I met with there—except the English. Let us go to Germany, and the Tyrol, and see Venice; which it is shameful, for any one who has crossed the Alps, not to have visited." Then, starting on his feet, he took a turn in the room,—yawned, and, looking out of the window, cried, "What a muddy sky for the month of August! Yes: we will go abroad!"

Lady Foxglove, though somewhat imperious, was a loving wife; and hastened to prevent the progress of the bilious fit. "Well, my dear Cecil, repress your discontent: after our son's marriage we can set out on your proposed scheme. We are sure of Arabella's being delighted: she was too much pleased with Italy not to be glad to return. Besides, it occurs to me that you may leave the newmarried couple in possession of the hall; and Bella, though a good sister, is a better daughter, and would prefer the society of her parents to that of the happy pair."

"Why *we* are a happy pair, are we not?" said Sir Cecil. His conscience somewhat reproached him with his duplicity; but at the moment, the ready compliance of his wife with his plans, and her evident desire to pacify him, had an exhilarating and soothing effect. His good-humour was completely restored by the entrance of his daughter, having in her hand an open letter.

"It is addressed to me," she said, "and I looked through it before I brought it here, as there might have been a private message to Miss Hawke; but that Tony Lumpkin is so full of his anticipations of grouse shooting, that he has quite forgotten the bird he has left at home. I will advise her to take a higher flight."

"Do not make mischief, Bella," said her mother. "Invent a civil, proper, love-like message when you see Miss Hawke."

"Indeed, mamma, I shall not volunteer any fibs in his service. When he has his own consent, which he hardly has yet, he may obtain hers in his own way. I dare say he will bring her a present of red game from the moors, and lay it at her feet, like a true Huron."

"Meantime," said Sir Cecil, who had been reading the letter, "he is arrived safe at Fairfax's; and is to set off on the morrow for the scene of his sport. Well; he will at least have the advantage of escaping our dinner-party. Now, my lady wife," so he sometimes called her, "to end this discussion which Arabella, and her letter from Charles, interrupted, are there any more whom we ought to invite? On these occasions, it is vain to save trouble, which is only deferred; for the circuit must be performed: and therefore do what, as Dr. Johnson said, will make more noise and soonest over."

"Pray let the matter rest where it is, Sir Cecil: there are as many as I can be civilly attentive to."

"Why, in a large party," he replied, "the guests entertain one another. What a pity it is that Charles will not be here! he would, at least, have taken Mr. Western off your hands. Arabella, remember to ask him very gravely, what is the form and material of a greyhound's body-clothes: and your ladyship will, no doubt, give Mrs. Western an opportunity of dilating on the management of her House of Industry. I hope its inhabitants are as well fed and clothed as those of her husband's kennel. Arabella, I know you will enjoy, too, talking high church with the archdeacon: keep him at a distance from the good Lady Mary Oldham, lest they should quarrel about Bible societies. The banker Welwyn's borough interest makes him a man of importance: be attentive to his young wife, and you will secure him."

Sir Cecil was again becoming bilious. He prudently rang the bell:—"Order my horse to the door: let Ponto and Basto loose: my son wishes them to have exercise before September:" and he left the room with the servant.

Arabella had prepared some needlework, and was seating herself by her mother, when she observed her father returning at full speed from the gate of the lawn, towards the house. She ran out to meet him.

"What's the matter, papa?"

A servant came to take his horse. "Put up the pointers," he said; "and let William get ready to go with me to Grantham."

"What's the matter, papa?"

"I had forgotten that this is the day for the meeting of the Bible Society at Grantham: Lady Mary Oldham particularly requested my attendance."

Arabella gently laid on his arm her finely-formed hand: he was one step below her at the door; and this little elevation gave to her height the advantage of being somewhat taller than her father:—a great help in argument or persuasion:—the sun shone full upon her; she raised the other hand to draw before her fine blue eyes the ringlets of her light auburn hair. She stood thus before him; keeping him at her arm's length from her, and occupying the middle of the door-way by her graceful figure; her intelligent, though not regularly beautiful features, beaming playful affection with profound thought.

"You shall not enter the house," she said, "till you tell me why you are such a hy—hy—hyp—hypocrite. You know how often you shock me, and offend Dr. Fullarton, by jesting on the Bible histories. If you do not believe the Bible, why—"

"But Lady Mary does; and if I refuse to attend such meetings, she will raise the whole country against me, and cry me down for an infidel. Let me come in, girl. I want to make myself smarter than was needful for a rural ride. You will see in the next *Grantham Mercury* an account of our proceedings—Sir Cecil Foxglove in the chair—my speech—the Rev. ———'s *prone*—a list of contributions, Lady Mary's name at the head of it for ten times as much as any body else. I shall try and shirk

from my subscription what may buy you, my pretty conscientious daughter, a sparkling cross

'Which Jews might kiss, and infidels adore:'—

a sign worshipped by all the world, when made of a precious metal."

The expression of melancholy in Arabella's countenance gained more and more force as this speech proceeded.

"Between you, my dear father," she said, "and the archdeacon, and Mr. Harrison, I know not what to think."

"Think as the archdeacon does, to be sure, child. Besides, as Saladin says in 'The Crusaders,' it does not much signify what religion a woman is of."

"For shame, papa. That is very well in the mouth of a Mussulman."

"My dear Bel, I have no time for controversy: I must be there by one o'clock. Ask your mother all about it."

If this conversation, hurried as it was, had not made a serious impression on the mind of Arabella, she might have asked her mother all about it. But she knew the spirit of this reference to her mother; and therefore would not keep to the letter of it. She simply told her mother the cause of her father's return, and the business that called him to Grantham. Lady Foxglove expressed a hope that he would get home without having been caught in the rain.

"What *can* your brother mean, Arabella," she continued, "by not saying a single word in his letter that may enable you to tell Miss Hawke that he has not forgotten her? He might, at least, have endeavoured in this way to continue his suit—for he certainly has a *penchant* for her."

"Dear mamma, Charles is afraid to compromise himself. When he has surmounted his bachelor dread of the plague of an establishment of which he himself must be chief manager, he will, in good earnest, try to bring the affair to a conclusion. He will make his proposal; she will accept it; her preference will not be very flattering, for she has not much discrimination, and would be equally

well pleased with the eldest son of any other country gentleman of the neighbourhood."

"You do not do justice to Clara Hawke," said her mother, somewhat peevishly.

"She does not do justice to Charles," said the daughter, with some emotion. "She does not perceive that, under a careless exterior, and, when in good humour, even a boorish manner, he conceals a strong mind—though without any more steady principles of virtue than most men of his class seem to possess. She thinks him illiterate: the truth is, he is not below learning, but above it: he says his Cambridge education was all lost time: that books are useless things except so far as they tell facts: for when any one is acquainted with these, he can judge of them as well as the writers of the books: that they who have not sensibility need not read poetry, and they who have, had better leave it alone: that ease and enjoyment are the true business of life to such as himself: that politics are a nuisance, and that Cooper and Scott, and two or three more, are the only—"

"Nonsense, child! you are making out your brother a mere epicurean."

"So he is, mamma; except that we never heard that Epicurus went a fox-hunting; whereas Charles is most egregiously fond of all field-sports. How did he learn this taste?"

"From the groom and gamekeeper, I suppose," said Lady Foxglove. "Your father is moderately fond of shooting: all the rest he declares to be a relic of barbarism; and I am of much the same opinion."

Lady Foxglove then told her daughter of the scheme of a continental tour that had been hastily sketched by herself and Sir Cecil.

"Admirable!" exclaimed Arabella. "Let me be the match-maker, and the union of Charles and Clara shall take place before the end of the year. You and papa must not interfere: if you make it a matter of parental authority, Charles will be restive. I will only just hint to Charles that he has the alternative of passing two winters with us on the Continent (where he knows, to his cost, there is neither hunting nor shooting, for him at least), or of bringing Mrs. Foxglove home to the hall: the

trouble of a journey that has very few charms for him, or a good home without any trouble at all; and rely on it, he will summon resolution to do what he has already a mind to do, and what must be done sooner or later; he must not die an old bachelor, for I have not the least inclination to be an heiress."

This was added in mere thoughtlessness by Arabella: it made her mother thoughtful, however, as being a view of futurity and an allusion to other events that must happen sooner or later. Each generation wishes to keep its place in the world as long as may be. Louis XIII. said to his son, "Comment t'appelles-tu, mon enfant?" "Louis quatorze, papa." "Otez l'enfant," said the king, "Louis treize n'est pas encore mort."* And Lady Foxglove was so well satisfied with her situation in this world, that she took no pleasure in anticipating a change. It was not that she was not sure of going to heaven; but she never thought about it seriously, except sometimes on a Sunday.

Yet Louis XIII. would have been much grieved to think that his son should not be Louis XIV.; and Lady Foxglove was very anxious that her son should be well settled, so as to take his turn in the order of succession, and provide for the continuation of the family. She saw, every Sunday, the monumental inscriptions in the chancel of the parish church, to the memory of the ancestors of the Foxgloves: a range of these marbles occupied the whole length of the northern wall: the names of the father and mother of Sir Cecil presented themselves as the commencement of a new display of the same pomp on the southern wall: her own name and that of Sir Cecil were to appear in due time and order. Thus her term and that of her descendants was marked out to her: but thus also the sense of individuality was lost in the thought "that her house should endure for ever."

She loved her son, even to fondness; without very well understanding the peculiarities of his character, any more than did her intended daughter-in-law. Her dislike

* "What is your name, my dear?"—"Louis the Fourteenth, papa." "Take the child away; Louis the Thirteenth is not dead yet."

of fox-hunting was maternal rather than sentimental; she was afraid he might break his neck; but she gave him great credit for his courage and prowess in the dangers and toils of the chase; and inferring, from his corporeal activity, his mental energy, declared that her son wanted only the will to cultivate his mind, not the power of improving it. Herein, she judged rightly: but it was this very want of will in his son that caused to Sir Cecil much vexation.

"You might," said he, "be statesman, orator, diplomatist, or whatever you choose: but you choose to be nothing but a country squire of the old school."

There subsisted, however, a strong coincidence between the father's judgment of human life, after long experience, and the son's young, and rough, and hardy interpretation of it. Sir Cecil was fully convinced of, what he called, the rascality of mankind; and therefore, though displeased with his son for keeping aloof from politics, his own fondness for them proceeded rather from habit and the gratification of self-importance, than from an expectation of any beneficial result from his own endeavours. "I would do my duty as a public man," said he; "but I am always thwarted by some petty, personal private interest; great views are ridiculed by all who cannot comprehend them—a vast majority."

In literature, though he so far differed from his son, that reading engaged his attention, yet he was disgusted by the subserviency of modern writers to the passions and prejudices of those whom, in their qualities of authors, they take on themselves to instruct. "These valets of the press do only what their masters, the public, bid them," said he; "and never dare to set them right."

On one point he entertained an opinion at which his son had not yet arrived. "If women are to mix in social converse with men, they really ought not to be so ill-informed as they are: their frivolity and want of the helps and appliances of judgment, lower the standard of their conversation, and make them mere pretty playthings."

"So they ought to be, father," said Charles; "pretty creatures, you would spoil them if you attempted to make them any thing else."

"Take care," said the father; "do not trust to their

want of power; they have a great deal of influence, and can raise a well-dressed mob at any time. They are the dupes of the interested, and very edged tools."

On the whole, Sir Cecil and his son differed as little as a father and a son usually do, when the latter is grown up and his character formed. Sir Cecil loved his daughter; he wished to cherish and encourage the independence of a mind, in which he thought he perceived much conformity with his own. He did not suspect that there was in that mind a moral integrity, of which he had no right to boast. Her age and sex had allowed her no opportunity for a practical display of this quality: he had observed, however, that she looked grave on many occasions when he jested; and that she was so romantic as to doubt whether improbity and folly were things of course, and not to be remedied.

Lady Foxglove did not adequately apprehend her daughter's character, who had, imperceptibly to her mother, grown up into a woman. Her manners and accomplishments ought, by this time, thought Lady Foxglove, to have attracted some suitable proposal for her establishment. Such had, in fact, been offered; but Arabella insisted that her future lord should be an object of her present respect. This was a condition hard to be fulfilled; for she would respect no one whose mind was not superior to her own. Far from wishing, like her mother, to contend for rule, she wished for a ruler in whom she might place implicit confidence. "I had rather be unmarried," said she, "than be married to a greater fool than myself. Papa and Charles may talk about women as contemptuously as they please; but if every one would resolve as I do, not to marry till she found a man wiser than herself, Saint Ursula would soon be able to double her train of eleven thousand virgins." No wonder this young lady was unmarried at the age of twenty-three years. Her admirers passed sentence on themselves.

Sir Cecil returned to dinner; it had waited for him, and he had no time to recount to his wife and daughter the transactions at Grantham, till after the conclusion of the meal. When the dessert was placed, pushing aside the chair in which he had sat at table, and drawing to it his large stuffed arm-chair, he was beginning with an expres-

sion in his countenance of contemptuous hilarity, when a number of notes were brought into the room.

The fingers of Lady Foxglove were at this moment in her water-glass. "Take the notes to your master." Sir Cecil received them, with a look of the same meaning as he had already adopted, as suitable to the story he was about to tell. "Do not spoil the seals, Sir Cecil; there may be some that Miss Hawke may wish to add to her collection."

"She has had all these over and over again. A neighbourhood is a repetition of disagreeables. Fullartons will have the honour—Mr. and Mrs. Welwyn accept obliging invitation—Mr. and Lady Mary Oldham wait on you—Mr. and Mrs. Western extremely sorry—death of a near relative;—this will reduce the number according to your wish, my lady-wife, and we must make another party for them when Charles is at home. 'Double, double toil and trouble.' — Hawke, Harrison, and the Abbé, the only personages I wish to behold of all the honoured guests, will come; they have told me so. Here is the Abbé's note, Bella; I presume it is written in French, as an additional lesson to his former pupil." Arabella took it, as well as the two notes which her father condescended not to open, as knowing their purport.

Sir Cecil gave the other notes to his lady, as she requested; "for," said she, "there is always a great deal of meaning in the style and appearance of a note."

"You are like the critics, who find in Homer more than Homer knew."

"Here is a cardinal's hat on the seal of the Archdeacon's note," said the lady; "you will not find such a fine thing as that in Homer."

"No; nor in the Bible neither," said Sir Cecil; "but you may find it in the 'Meditations of a dignified Ecclesiastic,' if there be any such book, for their edification."

"But the Cardinalate is a Catholic dignity," said the lady; "Dr. Fullarton would not desire it, surely?"

"Do not be too sure of that. At least, I may say I have known more than one of these high churchmen, who lament the want of such things in the Establishment. They all assume as much 'pride, pomp, and circumstance,' as they can."

"Such things are useful," said Lady Foxglove, "to impress a sense of religion on the lower orders."

"Are such the only means?" said Sir Cecil. "The poor Catholic clergy of this country and of Ireland are venerated and beloved almost universally by their flocks."

"Yes; but the minds of their people are enthralled by superstition."

"The question is concerning the influence of the pastors. The harder of belief the things are that they teach, the harder their task; yet they do perform it."

To escape from farther dispute, Sir Cecil said to his daughter, "Keep this seal for Clara. It is probably a desideratum in her cabinet of curiosities."

"The Welwyns' note," said Lady Foxglove, continuing her examination, "is written in a pretty running-hand by their daughter, with a *forget-me-not* on the seal. Is that a hint that she ought to have been invited?"

"Welwyn is rich," observed Sir Cecil; "and no doubt will, in due time, raise himself to the rank of the *grands du royaume;* but, for the present, I know not how far Lady Mary—who, with all her piety, never forgets that she is an Earl's daughter—will be contented to meet Mrs. Welwyn."

"Well," ejaculated Lady Foxglove; "Miss Welwyn is very young. I really do not know whether she is come out or not. Who are the Oldhams in mourning for?"

Sir Cecil took no interest in the question; at least he gave no answer; but, turning to his daughter, asked, "*Eh bien; que dit M. l'Abbé?*"

"*Il dit simplement,*" replied Arabella, "*l'Abbé Piron aura l'honneur de se rendre à l'aimable invitation du Chevalier et Miladi Foxglove.*"

"Simple enough," said Sir Cecil. "By the bye, *Chevalier* is not exactly equivalent to *Baronet.* It is a title which, as Esquire is quite worn out, as much as the title of Gentleman, it would be well for our gentry to adopt. They have already begun to do so, or permit it to be done for them, on the Continent. You remember the *Chevalier Anglais,* whom our friend *la Marquise,* was so happy to introduce to us at Marseilles as a *compatriote?* I discovered him to be a worthy man, going to Genoa on some very secret smuggling concern.—Where is Harrison's note?

—humph!—addressed to me! 'Dear Sir Cecil,—You told me there was an invitation to be sent to me; and as the Archbishop of Grenada says, '*à tout péché miséricorde*,' so etiquette says, *à tout billet réponse*.' I therefore repeat that, in deference to your well-meant wish that I should not quite make a hermit of myself, I will come. I hope you heard that your son is well "over the hills," though not "far away," nor "by command of the king." With best compliments to Lady Foxglove, and such love as she will accept to my fair antagonist, I am yours truly, Henry Harrison.'"

"What a quiz!" said the lady.

Sir Cecil indignantly cried out, "Lady Foxglove, I beg you will not speak with disrespect of a man of whose merit, after an acquaintance of twenty-five years, you ought to have an idea. He has contributed much to the education of your daughter; and whatever your son has of high-minded and independent in his character, he owes to the influence of Harrison. It is a duty we owe to society not to let such a man escape from it; which he himself is very well inclined to do, and in which your friend, the Archdeacon, would be very glad to assist him."

Sir Cecil and his lady often approached the lists of combat; but the barrier of good manners ever opposed their entrance on the field so fatal to matrimonial happiness. With apparent submission she changed the topic. "Well; but, Sir Cecil, you have not told us what happened at the meeting at Grantham this morning" He immediately resumed his sportively subacid look and tone. "Hawke is a fool," said he; "what can the man mean by putting himself forward as a candidate for the county, and, at the same time, opposing a measure so popular as the distribution of the Bible? When I had opened the business, he rose to say that funds amply sufficient were provided for the religion of the people in the revenues of the Establishment; that the matter might safely be left to the zeal of those who were in the receipt of such revenues; and that if a liberal public wished to subscribe money to charitable uses, the distress of the poor in Ireland called loudly for alleviation; a distress not rendered more tolerable by the inhuman remark of one of their countrymen, that Ireland had always been subject to periodical visitations of famine.

—'The people are dying there by hundreds and by thousands,' said he: 'we shall all agree in so laudable a destination of the sums that all here are ready to contribute.'

"He was reminded, that the meeting was convened for an especial purpose, and that those only were invited who were favourable to its object. 'I beg pardon,' said he, 'for my intrusion. I take a respectful leave of this good company, and will go to the Abbé Piron, who receives and sends to his Bishop what may be transmitted to Ireland, and to him I will give my mite. You will not be offended with me for assisting my fellow-men in their most pressing temporal need; and leaving their spiritual wants to those whom they properly concern.'

"Harrison also took the hint; but, before he went away, whispered to me, 'See that there be none here but the worshippers of Baal only.' I observed some persons curious to know what he had said in this secret way. Why did he not speak out? I therefore said, 'Mr. Harrison gave me to understand that he retires as not approving our object. You know that, as a Catholic, he finds faults in our authorized versions of the Scriptures.' A reverend orator, sent down *exprès*, then made a long discourse in praise of the Bible; somewhat superfluously, since they were all of one mind as to the book.

> 'Whose honesty they all durst swear for;
> Though not a man of them knew wherefore.'

"These, as you know, were not his words; nor did he take any notice of what I had maliciously thrown out respecting the unfaithfulness of our translation.

"In the hope of preventing any more speeches, I followed close on the reverend gentleman, observing that the Bible being the divine, inspired word, it seemed presumptuous to attempt to prove its excellence; that if we judged of its origin by its merit, we might be mistaken in our criticism; but that there could be no mistake in deducing its merit from its origin. I then adverted to the grand point—the supplies, and ended by a compliment to the ladies, quoting the words of a brother-baronet on a like occasion, that the fair sex were never so amiable as when supporting the cause of piety.

"Contributions having been levied on the willing and the unwilling, a party of men proposed to dine together at the inn. I was earnestly entreated to stay and propose their toasts; so much satisfaction had my conduct given! I excused myself; and they were obliged to be contented with voting me their thanks. Let us go and take a turn in the shrubbery."

Thither they went. Lady Foxglove soon found occupation with her exotics in the conservatory. Sir Cecil cried out, "There is not air enough here, Bella; let you and I take a walk in the grounds. We will return to tea, Lady F."

"Very well, Sir Cecil."

When fairly on their walk, "Papa," said Arabella, "I will trifle and be trifled with no longer on a matter of all others the most important. Is the Bible true or not?"

"To be sure it is true, my dear. How can you doubt it?"

"Because you do."

"I assure you I have no doubt on the question."

He said this with an expression that provoked her answer. "Then your doubt is settled into disbelief."

"And suppose it be so, Bella, what then?"

"Why then, I say, it may suit you, as a man, to keep up the farce of pretending to believe; but I am only a woman, and my opinions can be of no political consequence whatever."

"But, were you, dear Bella, to declare yourself an unbeliever, the consequences to yourself would be most disagreeable."

"I am aware of it, my dear sir; but no consideration ought to prevail to make us countenance imposture. Permit me to say, my dear father, you do not see your own conduct in its true light; you have so many to keep you in countenance in this double dealing; pardon me the term—such it really is."

Sir Cecil mused for some time; then said, "My dear Bella, what would you have me do? They talk of liberty of conscience; but there is none for persons of our rank of life; we must conform to what society requires of us. I have not the spirit of a martyr. A negative faith requires no martyr; and calls on no one to make proselytes. You have my secret, Bella."

"I thank you for the confidence, papa; a secret which you boast of before so many others But your faith is not totally negative?"

"As far as regards revelation. I am a believer in the great First Cause; that he is an intelligent Cause; for the cause of intelligence must be himself intelligent. I believe also in a future state of retribution; the existence of evil, whatever be its origin, is a proof of it."

Arabella mused in her turn, then asked, "Does my mother know that you are, what she would call any one else professing such sentiments—an infidel?"

"I am unwilling to let matters come to that extremity: she is one of that society to whom, as I say, one must conform; she does not sift me curiously. As I let her teach you and Charles your catechism, and take you to church, and as I go there myself when I have no excuse for staying away, your mother has no right to condemn me."

"Certainly not, sir, for being what you are; but for pretending to be what you are not."

"Oh! she would be sensible of the necessity of so doing."

"No necessity," said Arabella, "*can* justify imposture. And pray, what says, or what thinks Charles?"

"Your brother, my dear, is worse, as you would call it, than your father; he has pulled down every thing, and built up nothing; but he is an excellent fellow, with very good principles of conduct."

Arabella remarked, "He has a good understanding and a kind heart; but how can he have principles without admitting a moral responsibility?"

"I do not know that he does not admit it," said Sir Cecil; "indeed I do not exactly know his creed. We agree very well in disbelieving; and I treat him, as your mother treats me:—I refrain from scrutinizing, for fear of finding that he believes too little."

"I lament, I am shocked at my brother's indifference," said Arabella; "in such a high concern, indifference is unjustifiable, unworthy a rational being."

"Are not the believers indifferent?" asked Sir Cecil.

"Such persons are not believers," said Arabella; "they assent, but they do not consent."

"Well," said Sir Cecil; "and if you divide all the Christians in England into consenters, assenters, and dissenters, how many will you find of the first class?"

"Very few in the Establishment, papa; they are generally assenters merely. You do not use the word 'Dissenters,' in the sense of dissent from the Establishment, but of dissent from Christianity; there is not much of that sort of dissent amongst us; for mere *assent* does as well for all practical purposes. The *consenters* are to be found among the Catholics, and those properly called Dissenters."

"That is to say," observed the baronet, "amongst those who are not of the Establishment. Well, it is to be hoped we shall get rid of it ere long."

"Then you will not object to my no longer adhering to it?" asked his daughter.

"If you withdraw your support, it will be the more likely to fall. But what do you mean, girl?"

Arabella, taking her father affectionately by the hand, related to him with much agitation, that ever since their residence in Italy, she had entertained serious doubts whether the change of religion in England, at the time of what is called the Reformation, were justifiable. "In Italy," said she, "they confound it with the schisms and heresies that have, in all ages, disturbed the unity and peace of the Catholic Church for a time, and are now forgotten. I was much struck by the assurance with which they rely on the perpetual protection of God accorded from the beginning, and to be continued to the consummation of the age; and by the charity with which they regard the errors of their 'separated brethren,' as they call the several sects."

She was proceeding, when her father, who had been held mute by astonishment, interrupted her, "My dear Bella, you do not mean to make yourself a Catholic?"

"I am not yet convinced that I ought to do so, papa; when I am convinced, I hope you will not love me the less for doing what, in that case, will be my duty."

He pondered for a time in silence, when, seeing that he afflicted her by delaying to speak, he said, "My dear daughter, I will love you ever; I know how to esteem your understanding; I cannot but respect your virtuous

purpose. You shall be as free to believe all, as I and your brother are to reject all. Your mother"—

"Thank you, thank you, my ever dear papa, for your kindness and confidence," exclaimed Arabella, as soon as a flood of tears had given her relief. "It distresses me to think that I may grieve my mother, but, her prejudices considered"—

"Your mother need know nothing of the present state of your mind, my love," said the father. "Your further inquiries may lead to a different result from what you now seem to think undoubted. Charles, should the *worst* happen"—and he smiled gently as he pronounced the word—"will laugh at your imbecility; that is the worst," and again he smiled, "you have to fear from him. The world,—nonsense! let them talk, if you should give them this occasion, which I certainly hope you will not. But you speak of it as an affair almost decided. Have you consulted any one since our return to England?"

Abbé Piron tells me that, when I admit that the Catholic Church is the repository of revelation, he shall, if I desire it, think it his duty to instruct me in its doctrines, of which, he tells me, I know little or nothing. This is very saucy of him, papa, is it not,"—Arabella began to recover her spirits,—"considering the care that was taken to teach me my catechism? Our cousin, Mrs. Craig, says she will pray for my conversion; that is all she can do, she says. These two are the only persons who know of my state of mind."

"And Harrison?" said Sir Cecil.

"I ask him questions now and then, and he answers them; but he always cuts short the business by declaring himself to be no disputant."

"And the theologian of the north, Bryan O'Meara?"

"I applied to him, as a theologian, on some point, when he was here last, and he said, 'I am not yet admitted a learner, Miss Foxglove; it would ill become me to presume to be a teacher.'"

"And this is their spirit of proselytism!" remarked Sir Cecil.

"That is not our only mistake in regard to them, papa."

Arrived at the Hall, the father kissed his daughter ten-

derly. "Let us appear to your mother, my dear," he said, "as if nothing particular had passed."

Arabella was so happy that all had, thus far, passed so well, that she had no difficulty in seeming to be quite at ease. Sir Cecil's thoughtfulness was so common, that it could not lead to any suspicion of what was, in itself, so strange.

CHAPTER XIV.

On the day of the dinner-party, Sir Cecil and Lady Foxglove, and Arabella, were seated in the library to receive their guests: the carriage of the archdeacon first appeared in view.

"How is this?" said Sir Cecil; "Fullarton usually tries to make himself of importance, by arriving late, and making dinner wait for him."

"Why do you impute such a motive to him?" said Lady Foxglove.

"Simply because it suits his character; and because he has nothing to do, either at home or abroad, that need hinder him from being exact to his time."

Mrs. Fullarton entered the room, bearing in her manner a conviction that one, whom she admired more than herself, followed her; and that some, whom she loved better than herself, were not forgotten: she was quite at her ease; for, the possession of such a husband as the man who attended her, and of such children as those she had left in her nursery, elevated her lot above that of common mortals. There was nothing selfish in her self-complacency: self was its centre; but it radiated on all around, in cheerfulness and good-humour. She was very thankful for Lady Foxglove's kind inquiries after the five little ones at home, whom she had borne to her lord in five years from her marriage; and evinced her gratitude, by her anxiety concerning the health and safety of Mr. Foxglove, in his laborious sport of grouse-shooting. "I am so sorry," said she, "that he is not at home: the doctor has brought with him a friend, who is very desirous to have an opportunity of being introduced to him,—Mr.

Walton, of Eastbury: you know who he is, Lady Foxglove and I hope his visit may be the beginning of their future"—he was interrupted by the approach of her husband, who presented Mr. Walton, with an apology for the impossibility of asking permission to bring his friend with him. "Mr. Walton," said he, "called on me this morning, in his way to Scarborough; and I entreated him to pass a few days with his old tutor; as an inducement, I told him of our engagement for this day."

Lady Foxglove was, of course, happy to see any friend of the archdeacon, and received Mr. Walton with a gracious courtesy. The ceremony of his introduction to Arabella and Sir Cecil then took place.

Mr. Walton was a young man of about eight-and-twenty; but a fair and healthy complexion, with a frank and lively countenance, made him seem to be two or three years younger than he really was. Though tall, and somewhat of the Herculean mould, he was graceful in his carriage; his manner somewhat affectedly *pronounced;* a little too well pleased with himself, but evidently desirous of pleasing others. He was perfectly well dressed; and his air bespoke the confidence of one who knew himself the object of the admiration of those whose praise both gives and follows the celebrity of fashion.

Arabella did not do him justice: she set him down for a coxcomb. The point at which Mrs. Fullarton's speaking had been interrupted, left it doubtful whether his future friendship with her brother had not an ulterior view: this suspicion was aggravated by the archdeacon's declaration, that the visit to Foxglove Hall had been held out as an inducement for Mr. Walton's stay. There had been, moreover, when he made his bow to her, an expression of complacency in regard to himself, and of curiosity in regard to herself, that offended her, and, for the moment, alarmed her. She received him with all the self-possession of indifference; but, in the recesses of her own mind, she said,—"I know the conceit of the *men;* and this one seemed to think,—'humph, she will do well enough:' he shall know that I 'will be wooed, and not unsought be won,' if won at all."

Mr. and Mrs. and Miss Hawke arrived next; and Ara-

bella's suspicions were confirmed by the observable difference in Mr. Walton's manner when he was introduced to Clara, whom Arabella admitted to be a much prettier girl than herself. He was struck with Miss Hawke's beauty; but he had evidently no *arrière pensée*. The young man's self-complacency kept him unconscious of the meaning of his own behaviour, and of the inference drawn from it.

Mr. Walton contrived, however, to draw the young ladies and their two mammas towards the window, for the purpose of looking out on the grounds, and the trees, and the small lake, or piece of water, studded with little islands and weeping willows. The mammas soon retired; and Miss Hawke, to continue the conversation on the same topic, pointed to the spire of the parish church, at the distance of half a mile, peering above the wood which concealed the village; and Arabella directed their attention to a tower, "also bosomed high in tufted trees," near the lake. "It is not a modern ruin," said she, "but the old entrance into the grounds, till my grandfather, fifty years ago, widened the brook into the expanse of water you now see. It terminates there; and the tower, formerly the porter's lodge, is inhabited by a woodman; and the gateway, blocked up on the other side, is now a boat-house for a sailing-boat, and some pretty little canoes."

"I learned to manage a boat on the Lake of Geneva," said Walton; "if you dare trust yourselves with me, ladies, I assure you I am no novice."

"He is quite at home," thought Arabella; but she was relieved from the necessity of answering, by the appearance of an open carriage, on the foremost of whose two seats sat two elderly men, one of whom drove the horse; a servant on the other seat, was in readiness to take the carriage, when quitted by the gentlemen, whom he helped to descend from it.

"Here are Mr. Harrison and l'Abbé Piron," said Arabella. Dr. Fullarton took on himself to introduce his young friend to them: he knew that this act was rather officious in him; but he observed that Sir Cecil delayed to perform it, and he knew the influence of these two gentlemen on the opinions of Arabella.

The Welwyns and the Oldhams arrived soon after, and the party prepared to leave the library for the dining-room. Sir Cecil led forth Lady Mary Oldham. Lady Foxglove had positively declared she would call the Archdeacon to conduct her; but he, wishing to secure the intimacy of his pupil with a family in which he hoped, by the same means, to strengthen his own interest, suggested that Mr. Walton, as a stranger, should be appointed to that honour. Mr. Oldham felt offended by this preference; a feeling which he politely signified, by hoping that Mr. Walton would not always be a stranger amongst them; at the same time giving his arm to Mrs. Hawke. Mr. Hawke had his reasons for courting the banker, and offered his arm to Mrs. Welwyn, at the same time making his daughter pair off with Mr. Welwyn. Mrs. Fullarton did not much like being under the care of Mr. Harrison, but the only choice was between him and the Abbé. The Archdeacon approached Miss Foxglove with an affectation of chivalrous gallantry, that rather trenched on his dignity, and said,—"I have been looking for my compensation for abandoning the mother, to the happiness of waiting on the daughter." Arabella silently acquiesced, saying to Abbé Piron,—"You, who have such good reasons for being a bachelor, ought, I think, to be preferred by Mrs. Fullarton to Mr. Harrison, who has no reason at all for being one."

He looked at her mildly, but reprovingly, and said,—"I will not reply seriously to what Miss Foxglove intended jestingly." His look distressed her. "Pardon me," she returned in a hurried voice, "if I have done wrong. I meant only to regret that you had no companion in our procession. Pray sit next to me at table." He bowed acquiescence; but added, "At your leisure, consider the 'good reasons' to which you alluded."

The company were now seated to a sufficiently plentiful and well-ordered dinner; when it became apparent how little pleasure they derived from any other part of their entertainment. In the country and in the smaller towns, each one is obliged to take the neighbourhood as he finds it: dissimilar characters, opposite interests, irreconcilable differences of opinion, are brought into perpetual collision by reiterated attempts to keep on good terms, as the

phrase is. In large towns, the inhabitants of the higher classes may, in a great degree, select their society, and command the disposal of their own hours, but they must give up all that is lovely in nature, and endure foul air, dissonant noises, filthy sights, and, as said Madame de Stael, *les ruisseaux de la rue de Bac.*

The discordant elements brought together in this party were still more than usually repelled from each other by the storms that were now gathering in the political atmosphere. The new revolution of France had begun to affect social intercourse in the same sense as the old one had done, forty years before. The contest which had, in fact, never totally subsided, began to be renewed with acrimony; and all the prudence and mutual forbearance of well-bred company, assembled for mutual enjoyment, were indispensable to prevent the breaking forth of those "jealousies and fears," which all felt in regard to those who were arrayed against them.

The ladies took part in the dispute, and not without reason; since it was one that might affect the peace and security even of private families.

After the fish and soup had been discussed, Lady Mary Oldham said, "You have friends, Mrs. Hawke, who were in Paris during the three dreadful days of July; I hope you have heard from them?"

"Miss Warren writes to me," said Mrs. Hawke, "that, to be sure, they were terribly frightened; but that they were in no danger; only obliged to keep in the back rooms, as the bullets entered the windows looking on the street."

"A spirited lady," said Mr. Walton; "had she been in the street, she might have taken part in the fray."

The sentiments of a man of twelve thousand a year were of importance. Lady Mary looked at Mr. Walton: his speech was equivocal, and he was provokingly resolved to maintain his political *incognito*, as he had proposed to himself to prevent the conversation from becoming too serious.

"What wretches," said Lady Mary, "to think of firing into the houses!"

"Those whom your ladyship calls wretches," said Mr. Harrison, "must have been the king's troops; for the

houses were generally held against him. I do not make this remark from any party bias of my own; but solely that your reproaches may be directed according to your intention, and not against the king's friends."

Some people argue as those dogs who hunt by the nose follow their game: they run along the line of the scent while the game is escaping in an opposite direction. "O, yes," said Lady Mary; "the wretches (meaning this time the people) had unpaved the streets; they then carried the stones to the tops of the houses, and threw them down on the troops."

"An attack from the tops of the houses," said Mr. Harrison. "could not be prevented by firing at the windows."

Mr. Walton came to Lady Mary's relief. "Probably they threw the stones from the windows also; at least, I know one case that would justify reprisal. A friend of mine, who has been in Paris from the beginning of last winter, was sitting as quietly as he could, on the second of the three days, in his lodging on the second floor, when four men with their muskets on their shoulders entered his room: he was, as may be supposed, a good deal alarmed; when the spokesman of the party said, 'Ne vous derangez pas, Monsieur; soyez tranquille: il y a des Suisses là-bas dans la rue: nous vous demandons la permission d'ouvrir les fenêtres de votre apartement, nous desirons en fusiller quelques-uns.' The Englishman had, by this time, recovered his coolness; 'Volontiers, Messieurs; tant que vous voudrez.' The Frenchman proceeded to open the windows, and looking down, 'Hah! nous pouvons très bien les ajuster d'ici.' My friend took care to keep so far back in his room, as that a ball from the street should strike the ceiling without hitting him."

"A necessary precaution," said Mr. Welwyn; "there were three Englishmen who were looking out of their hotel on a party of soldiers marching below; the street was barricaded at the end, and the soldiers could not force the passage; they retired; but while doing so, they fired at the windows, though there was no assailant; one of the three English was killed, a second wounded, and the third covered with the blood of the slain man: eight balls were

counted in the ceiling: a waiter in the next room was desperately wounded."

"Shocking!" said Lady Mary; but whether the exclamation was provoked by indignation or pity, remained doubtful. Lady Foxglove tried to make a diversion in her favour.

"Mr. Piron, what do you think of the state of your country?"

"Madam," said he, "I think that the conduct of the Duc d'Orléans, in usurping the place of his relative, has but one parallel in modern history; the deposition of your James the Second by his son-in-law."

"Sing tantarantara, rogues all!" said Sir Cecil.

This atrabiliare extravagance surprised the company, and amused the attendants; no one could take offence, for it was, at any rate, impartial, and contradicted no one's opinion on the present question. Mr. Harrison *did it* into plain prose. "If the great ones of this earth wish their rights to be respected, they ought to respect them themselves. This play of king *de facto* and king *de jure*, of right hereditary and right popular, is a loosing game for sovereigns."

"Hang these politics," said Mr. Walton, "they deprive us of the pleasure of the ladies' conversation. Lady Foxglove, I took the liberty of proposing to Miss Foxglove, a party on the water,—it is a beautiful evening."

Lady Foxglove, who shrewdly suspected the Archdeacon's motive for bringing his pupil with him, and saw no good reason, as she said to herself, why the matter should not take its own course, answered complacently, and said she would propose it in the drawing-room. Thus encouraged, he spoke of the party to the other ladies; and as Arabella had no wish to repeat her Italian music to people who did not understand it, and as Miss Hawke could not sing at all; and Mrs. Fullarton guessed the purport of the excursion to be in unison with her own and the Archdeacon's scheme; and Mrs. Hawke wished her daughter to be amused, and Mrs. Welwyn really liked it; and Lady Mary wished to appear condescending, and cards were out of season in the month of August,—the thing was agreed to by all; it being of course understood, that all who should be fearful were at liberty to stroll on

the banks, or amuse themselves in the room or summer-house of the tower, according to the suggestion of Mr. Walton, who wished to rid himself of all, except the eternal chaperons. He had said to the Archdeacon, on their way to the Hall, "Doctor, if I should fall in love with this fair one, you will find it out by the pains I shall take to gain the good-will of the *natives:* you know whom we are to meet: give me an account of them, that I may be *en pays de connoissance.* I shall try to be very agreeable, because women choose their husbands by the opinion of others."

"Miss Foxglove is not likely to do so," said the Archdeacon; "but of her and her family it will be prudent in me to say nothing that may be remembered hereafter; judge for yourself. Mind, I disclaim all responsibility: I will never recommend a wife or a physician to any man; both affairs are too serious."

"So long as your disclaimer is only in words, doctor," said Walton, "your friends may rely on your assistance in time of need."

"Nay," said the doctor, "I have only pointed out the prize; you are no boy, Mr. Walton."

"Indeed," said Mrs. Fullarton, mistaking the meaning of the last words, "it is quite time for Mr. Walton to settle, and this is a very suitable connection."

"My dear," said the doctor, "you will set Mr. Walton against it, by any recommendation, however just."

"Well then, tell us who is who," said Walton, "leaving out, as you said, the family of the fair intended."

"It may be as well to tell you," said the Archdeacon, "that Sir Cecil is, I fear, a Deist."

"You don't say so!" cried Mrs. Fullarton.

"He is certainly," proceeded the doctor, "very indifferent in matters of religion."

"Why he presided at the Bible Society last week," said Mrs. Fullarton.

"For which," said the doctor, "he had some other motive than respect for the Bible, which he took care to tell them was mistranslated. I understood, too, his sneering irony in asserting its divinity and inspiration."

"Why, you were not there, my dear," said Mrs. Fullarton."

"I took care," said the doctor, "to have a full report. I asked Mr. Harrison, moreover, whether he had whispered any thing to Sir Cecil respecting mistranslation; he answered, 'Your question compels me to say, that I have more than once asserted this to Sir Cecil.' 'But at that time, Mr. Harrison?' said I. 'At that time I made no allusion to it.' This explained the whole matter to my satisfaction, or dissatisfaction."

Perceiving Mr. Walton to care very little, whether Sir Cecil believed in the Bible or not, the Archdeacon defended himself from the implied charge of being tiresome, by saying, "In times like the present, Mr. Walton, it is necessary that the members of our profession should watch the proceedings of such men as Sir Cecil. He is avowedly a discontented man; and is so fond of Abbé Piron and of that theorist Harrison, and of that Irish boy, who has been educated at a Catholic college, in the north of England, that it is hard to say what his real notions are. Your future mother-in-law," proceeded the Archdeacon, recovering the serenity of his countenance, which had been disturbed by the mention of things and persons disagreeable to him, "is a very lady-like woman, and bears her husband's eccentricities with—"

"Nay, I am sure," said Mrs. Fullarton, "Sir Cecil lets her have her own way in every thing, and is a most indulgent husband."

Mrs. Fullarton was incapable of apprehending that a mind of the higher order, having long vainly endeavoured to raise to its own level one that ought to be its fellow, at length abandons its efforts through a sense of fatigue; and had any one told her that the ancient tyrannical invention of attaching the dead to the living, was often repeated in matrimony, she would have thought it a gross and pedantic slander on the holy bond.

The doctor went on, "Lady Foxglove fills her situation in life with the greatest propriety, and is universally respected. Miss Foxglove rather leans to her father."

"Nay, I am sure," again intruded Mrs. Fullarton, "Miss Foxglove is most affectionate to her mother, and always shews her the greatest possible deference."

Walton was a man of the world, and did not give any one credit for honesty or sincerity; he surmised, that

both the doctor and his wife spoke of the absent, according to their preventions, and to the manner in which they had been severally treated by the parties; that Sir Cecil and his daughter were repulsive to the doctor and to his good-natured wife, while Lady Foxglove admired the Archdeacon and held his wife in no more than her due estimation.

"What company shall we meet?" said Walton.

"There will be Mr. Oldham," said the Archdeacon; "he has lately succeeded to his estate, and married the daughter of the earl of St. ——. He is a good country gentleman, an active magistrate, but very methodistically inclined; he put two men in the stocks for playing at quoits one Sunday evening last summer, and the next Sunday put them in again for being found drunk in the street of the village. Lady Mary Oldham, too, means well, but does harm to her own cause by meddling, and by excessive abuse of the liberals, who cannot now be treated as they were forty years ago. Oldham is feeling his way to represent the county: I should be glad to turn out the Whig member, but Oldham is too much of a second-reformation man for me. Mr. Hawke, whom you will meet to-day, has declared himself a candidate, but he is even an *ultra*-Whig. We must find some other."

"Why, Mr. Archdeacon," said Walton, "you seem to be making an incursion into the enemy's country! Deists, Papists, Methodists, Whigs!"

"We are, in truth, in a most distracted state, Mr. Walton, and at the beginning of a new reign too. The late king proceeded in the steps of his father of glorious memory, as long as he could."

"Never mind kings," said Walton, "is there any more company?"

"Oh, I must not forget to tell you, that Mr. Welwyn has great interest at Grantham: it is thought that he will be able to return one member. If you can secure him and your lady-love, you will then, I hope, be often in our neighbourhood."

Walton's eyes sparkled at the suggestion, for he was ambitious of displaying himself in Parliament. He had been indulging the thought when the carriage drove up to the door; and what had offended Arabella in his man-

ner on his presentation to her, was, in part, imputable to the visions that flitted before his imagination. At dinner, he was seated, as may be supposed from what has been related, at no great distance from her; he appeared to advantage on the occasion; for he was the only one who made the conversation to be general. He had an audible voice and a quick eye, useful, both of them, in taking the lead in a dinner party.

"Mr. Welwyn," said he, "I passed this morning through your town of Grantham, It is very flourishing; there is a great deal of building going on."

Mr. Hawke assisted the inquiry, if such it may be called when the inquirer is already informed, as Mr. Walton was.

"Pray," said Mr. Hawke, "what name will you give to the street you are building?"

"We think of calling it Liberty Place," said Mr. Welwyn, "since it is hoped, that, by means of these new houses, the borough will be freed from its ancient control."

"And put under yours, Mr. Welwyn," said Mr. Hawke. "You are so great a friend to the place, I hope you will call it Welwyn-street, and be yourself a representative of the borough."

Mr. Welwyn was flattered, but said nothing.

The first course was now drawing to a conclusion. Every one had conversed right and left. It is inconvenient, if not impossible, at dinner, to extend the talk laterally farther than to the nearest person; and the table was so broad, with a garnished epergne in the centre, that no voice could be conveyed across. But the very semblance of silence was dispelled by each one's sense of the duty owed to society, the great duty of saying something.

Arabella, placed between the Abbé and the Archdeacon, had sustained the former against the superior dignity of the latter; being herein readily assisted by the good manners of the Archdeacon himself, who, according to the maxim of Roman policy, provided the force of empire remained with him, willingly transmitted all that was empty. At this point of time, Mrs. Fullarton, who had been educated far in the north, revived the remembrance of an antiquated superstition.

"Bless me," said she. "we are thirteen at table; one of us will die within the twelvemonth."

"It is curious," said the Abbé, "that this is said in France as well as in England."

Mr. Harrison, who had the *mania* of reasoning about every thing, said, "According to the chances of human life, it is about five to two that such an observation will prove true." He was proceeding to prove it by calculation, when a carriage with four post-horses drove rapidly up to the door. The servant announced, "Mr. Foxglove, and Mr. O'Meara, Sir Cecil."

Hastily making his excuses to the company, Sir Cecil went out; and met, in the vestibule, his son leaning on the arm of his friend.

"My dear Charles, how is this?" said he.

"My dear father," said the son, "I have sprained my ancle on the moors; there was an end of red game and black game for me, so I resolved to return home. I would not tell you of the accident for fear of causing uneasiness. I wrote to Bryan to beg of him to leave college a few days sooner than was proposed, and help me on the road."

"O'Meara," said the father, "this is the first time you come here sooner than I could have wished; but thanks and welcome as ever."

"Let me go into your dressing-room, father," said Charles, "to save me the trouble of hobbling up stairs. Bryan, go to your own room, and call on me when you come down, and we will join them at dinner. Who are the company, father?"

O'Meara had left the room, when Sir Cecil answered, "You know them all, except a young man whom Fullarton has brought; observe him,—I think he has views. I must return to the party. Be as quick as you can."

Sir Cecil reported in the dining-room what has been related. Arabella, alarmed at hearing of her brother's accident, rose from her seat. "You cannot go to him," said Sir Cecil, "he will be here immediately." By the time that the second course was arranged, he appeared, still supported by O'Meara. He made his way to where his mother was seated; gave his sister a pat on the ear, and shook hands with her as he passed her chair, and, with

apologies for his intrusion as he called it, met his mother, who had risen and advanced a few steps. She placed him between herself and Walton, with speeches suited to the occasion.

Bryan O'Meara had made his bows to the company as he passed; they returned his salute according to their different characters and different degrees of intimacy. Arabella received him with frankness and kindness, blushing however as she spoke to him; a slight symptom which did not escape Walton's observation. "Is this," thought he, "the Irish boy, of whom Fullarton spoke so contemptuously, that I did not think it worth while to inquire about him?" He looked again on the young man, who might be four-and-twenty years old; for a dark complexion, and a serious expression of countenance, made him appear two years older than his real age; a young man above the middle stature, well formed, and with a bearing, that, although diffident, was composed and even dignified. His physiognomy even awed Walton, so much did it announce of what was superior to the mere man of fashion,—animated intelligence, reflection, high resolves.

On Charles's naming him to Walton, a distant bow on his part, and a haughty bow on Walton's, established their right to a farther intercourse.

Lady Foxglove thanked O'Meara for his attention to her son during their journey. The Archdeacon graciously made room for him between himself and the lady of the house. Before he seated himself, he made the sign of the cross. This was done with an air that implied he neither desired nor avoided observation. Dr. Fullarton had not observed that the Abbé Piron and Mr. Harrison had done the same thing at the beginning of dinner; having said grace before meat, he considered himself minister for ecclesiastical affairs, and regarded this movement on the part of Bryan with a mixture of surprise and disapprobation. Mr. Piron, who perhaps felt that the doctor had no better right than himself to be chaplain, replied to the look of the Archdeacon, "A constant practice, sir, of the early Christians."

Sir Cecil, afraid of a rejoinder from the Archdeacon, that might lead to controversy, cried out, "I am like the

king's majesty,—head of my own church. Harrison, I am very glad that your calculation of the chances of life is superfluous. We are now fifteen at table. I did not like having little more than two to one in my own favour for a twelvemonth's lease."

"Pardon me, Sir Cecil," said Mr. Harrison, "you forget that there is, besides, twelve to one in your favour, as you term it, of every individual of the company."

"That may be," said Sir Cecil; "but I am the oldest man of the company, except the Abbé, and he is prepared;—I doubt whether I am so or not."

"It is good for us all to entertain that doubt," said the Abbé.

"What good can it do us?" asked Mr. Oldham.

"It will teach us humility," said the Abbé.

Sir Cecil, perceiving that it would be as impossible for him to maintain uniformity of opinion, as it is for the august personage whose delegate within his own dining-room he had arrogated to be, cried out to his son, "Charles, how did you contrive to break your leg?"

"Not quite so bad as that, sir," said his son; "had it been so, I should not have had the pleasure of meeting this good company."

"Civilly said," observed Sir Cecil, "for a man just returned from the woods, and the wilds, and the wolds."

"I was taking my aim," said Charles, "when I stepped into an invisible hole; wrenched my foot; fell forwards; struck the gun against the ground; it went off—"

"Mercy!" exclaimed Miss Hawke, "you might have been killed."

"Not by the gun, fair lady," said Charles, flattered by her alarm; "if you marry a fox-hunter, lay your account to having him brought home with a broken neck; but the shot always goes out in a line with the barrel. I have heard, however, that Bryan's countrymen carry guns that shoot round the corners, but I never saw any of them."

"Poor Ireland!" said O'Meara; "Is it not enough that she is miserable? Must she be ridiculous also? Do read Miss Edgeworth's book on Irish bulls, and learn justice and mercy."

"I need not read a book to learn that the Irish are the

best people on earth," said young Foxglove; "I only wish they could endure a jest."

"If they had nothing but jests to endure," said O'Meara;—"but you inflict wrongs in earnest."

"You are in earnest a patriot, Bryan," said Sir Cecil; "for you seem to think the wrongs of Ireland of more importance than your friend's broken leg."

"Yes, Sir Cecil," said Bryan, "since the gun behaved as an English gun ought, and did not turn upon him."

"Well," said Charles; "I was helped to my bed, which I kept the first day; the sofa, the second day; got down stairs the third day, and home the fourth. I hope to be quite stout by the first of September; and as Bryan does not like shooting well enough to accompany me *à la chasse*, I shall be safe from the obliquities of his fire-arms."

The dessert was now placed on the bare table, when Sir Cecil, who in many things felt as a country squire of the olden time, gave "The King."

"Will you not give Church and King, Sir Cecil?" said Dr. Fullarton; "you know you are head of the church within these your dominions, as you aver."

"I will give the church," said Sir Cecil, "when you shall have settled amongst yourselves which, where, whence, and what it is."

The ladies were aware of the difficulty experienced by Sir Cecil in repressing the spirit of discord; and like good peace-makers, came to his assistance by taking share in the conversation.

When they retired, he prudently ordered coffee almost immediately, and promoted a speedy adjournment to the drawing-room. On the entrance of Walton with the others, Arabella said to him, "Our party on the lake cannot take place this evening; my brother cannot go with us, and I should be sorry to leave him. Some other time." She half repented of these last words, when she perceived how adroitly Walton availed himself of them to secure a future opportunity. He then drew Mr. Welwyn to the inclosed lawn between the windows, on pretence of looking at the peacocks, and came to an understanding with him on the subject of the borough of Grantham. Mr. Welwyn thought he could secure his return,

and asked five thousand pounds, which Walton agreed to give. The utmost secrecy was promised on both sides.

He then tried to sound the character and views of Bryan O'Meara, but was received with a reserve and caution that baffled his efforts. A mutual instinctive dislike seemed the only feeling common to both;—with this difference, that Walton could not help entertaining for O'Meara a degree of respect with which he did not succeed in inspiring the other in his turn.

Charles Foxglove had reclined himself against one upright end of a sofa, with his feet upon the seat that he might favour his sprained ancle. Arabella took the arm of Clara Hawke and led her to the sofa, saying, "Charles, we are come to nurse you." Bryan was leaning over the other end, opposite to his friend. "It is very kind of you," replied Charles, to his sister; "Bryan has been on that service these two days." O'Meara was retiring, when young Foxglove called to him; "Stay, I conjure you. I have made a rude speech, but unintentionally. Do not take offence."

"By no means, Charles; but, certainly, I did interpret it as a hint that you wished to be alone with—"

"Alone! a *tête-à-tête* would be another and different affair; in such a case, I may rely, I see, on the quickness of your perception."

O'Meara kept his station, and assisted Arabella's purpose of making Clara and Charles agreeable to each other. He controlled and softened his friend's rough and *brusque* manner, which was, in truth, for the greater part affected. He turned what was said by Clara in such a way as to give it elevation and correctness; for Clara did not want understanding, but only a due attention to the art of making it available; relying for all her charm on the sweetness of her disposition and on her incontestable beauty. Arabella was gratified by his acting as her auxiliary, which he did with good effect; and Clara felt flattered by the attentions of a second young man, who, whatever was his condition in life—a matter as yet undetermined—was a very handsome man, with perfectly gentlemanly manners, and animated and versatile converse.

Mrs. Hawke was interested to find out how the land

lay. She came up, saying, "I think you young people want an overseer."

"Surely, madam," said Bella, "brothers and sisters—"

"You are not all of you brothers and sisters," interrupted Mrs. Hawke. The two young ladies looked confused. Charles looked pleased. Bryan looked grave. Mrs. Hawke set herself to the interpretation of the riddle; it was solved in a manner most satisfactory to herself with regard to her views on Charles as a son-in-law; for he had seemed pleased at being charged with designs that required her vigilance. Clara's sensitiveness was natural, as her mother well knew that Charles was far from disagreeable to her. But why did Bella look confused? O'Meara's seriousness might arise from being reminded of the hopelessness of his situation; but what interest could Bella have in this party of four? . . . .

Mrs. Hawke thought that the real concern which she was desirous of promoting, would succeed the better with the fewest bystanders: she could not withdraw Arabella, but she told Bryan: "We shall stifle the poor invalid, if we surround his couch in this way; all the world is on the lawn; take a turn with me to join them." They went out at the window on a level with the floor; for the drawing-room was not like a town drawing-room,—up one flight of stairs; but such a one as becomes a great house in the country. She then said: "What would you say, if the same event that has taken place at Paris, were to happen in Dublin?"

"Madam," answered he, "you must not ask me what I should say."

"That answer is quite sufficient, Mr. O'Meara. Who can say that it will not happen? and who can say that such an affair would last more than five hours?"

"You will be overheard, madam," said Bryan.

"Trust me for that. I allow a few insignificant words to be heard, so as not to appear to be whispering; while my meaning reaches your ear alone. I trust you; for I was pleased with the sentiments you uttered at dinner-time. I then said to myself (I will confide the secret to you), 'Is this the little boy that I saw fourteen years ago, helping his mother to pick fruit in the market-garden?'"

She looked at him; his countenance was utterly unmoved.

"In this, madam, there is no confidence; it tells me no secret."

"But it tells me, Mr. O'Meara, what you are; and that you are a young man of a very superior mind. I said it,—pardon my impertinence,—to try you. I formed a high opinion of you when you were here a twelvemonth ago, before you went with Mr. Harrison to Italy; and afterwards on your return in the beginning of the year. 'But can he stand this test?' thought I. You have stood it, sir, and well. You have heard me without confusion, and without anger."

"I did not know, madam, that I was on my trial. I am willing to confess, that my self-possession is the result of effort and reflection. In my past and future condition of life, I regard the will of the divine Providence that determines what is best for me. That man is an exile from the presence of his Creator,—that he is indebted to vicarious merit for his redemption,—that he can do nothing towards his restoration from his fallen state without strength and aid from above; these thoughts preserve me from all regret that my lot is not amongst the great and the wealthy."

"I ought to be ashamed, sir," said Mrs. Hawke, "for having trifled with a spirit like yours. Pray forgive me."

"To suppose me to be offended, is to regard me still as in subjection to that judgment of the world which you admit to be erroneous. For my own views in this matter, I am indebted to my mother and my subsequent instructors in the great truths which we all believe."

"Believe!" said Mrs. Hawke; "we, the herd of us, believe nothing to any good purpose."

"I am aware," said Bryan, "that these topics are not in the tone of good company; and that my low family and fortunes are not in keeping with its *representation*. I therefore abstain from all mention either of the one or of the other; unless," added he, smiling, "on extraordinary provocation."

"You now shew your good sense," replied the lady, "as you have already made known to me your high principle."

She leaned on his arm, as she walked with him on the lawn. The Oldhams were surprised; the Fullartons were mortified; the Welwyns behaved to him with more of respect than before: all this was intended and desired, by Mrs. Hawke. "Lady Mary," she cried out, "you love piety; here is a young man that bears it at his heart's core."

"You are to be a Catholic priest, sir, are you not?" asked Lady Mary.

"In that case, madam, you will allow that the quality which Mrs. Hawke has the goodness to attribute to me, would be essentially necessary."

"Certainly, sir; I wish all our clergy thought so."

Lady Mary Oldham was pleased with his manners, and entered into a conversation which, however, ended in cross purposes.

Meantime, Walton had established himself at the end of the sofa,—the place that O'Meara had been compelled to abandon,—and availed himself of the position to carry on his approaches to Arabella, previous to the siege in form on which he had resolved. He saw, by the affected indifference of Charles, that his suit would be acceptable to her family. Clara was considered as the betrothed of Charles by every one, except the parties themselves: and from her gentle, and even deferential attentions, Walton was informed that an alliance with him was looked to as an advantage. He entreated Arabella's permission to lead her to the piano-forte. "I have lost my water-party, for the present," said he, laying a stress on the words, 'for the present:' pray make me amends."

The company on the lawn hearing the voice of Miss Foxglove, of course flocked into the drawing-room. She sang an Italian romance with exquisite taste and judgment. She then called on O'Meara, and played an accompaniment while he sang the beautiful words of "The Exile of Erin," His enunciation was distinct; his voice deep and mellow; and his feeling, such as carried with it the sympathy of his audience. Walton bit his lip with vexation.

During the singing, Mrs. Fullarton, to whom Walton had privately signified his admiration of Arabella, whispered to Lady Foxglove an invitation to dinner on an early day

in the following week. "I will have none to meet you but the Hawkes." The match-makers understood each other, and the party was agreed to.

The company retired, little satisfied with the general, and, therefore, unmeaning attentions of their entertainers. Mr. Harrison and Mr. Piron were the only persons free from all interested views, and were more agreeable to all than any of the others had been to each other.

CHAPTER XV.

"And now," said Sir Cecil Foxglove to O'Meara, whom he had summoned to his own room the morning after the dinner party; "what do you mean to do with yourself since you have finally quitted college?"

"I have not seen my mother these six years past, Sir Cecil; I shall go and visit her in Ireland."

"And give up Harrison entirely?"

"Mr. Harrison pressed me most kindly to return *home*, as he was pleased to call his house: I shall certainly think it my duty to pass some days with him before I go."

"Why his house *has been* your home for the last ten years."

"I am deeply sensible of my great obligations to Mr. Harrison, but my mother—"

"That is all very well, my dear boy: but how are you to be provided for? You say you will not be a priest?"

"I know and venerate the excellence of that state, but—"

"I understand," said Sir Cecil; "you have no vocation."

He pronounced this last word with a smile that made Bryan look grave. He rejoined—

"My dear O'Meara, I respect every one's conscience, though I have none of my own, Yes; now I think of it, I am very conscientious: and in proof of the fact, I will tell you that, when the Abbé and Harrison took you out of my hands to make a priest of you, I consigned you over to them, and would have nothing to do with a purpose so detrimental to our pure and reformed—"

"And pray, Sir Cecil," asked Bryan with a smile, "in what quality, *comme quoi*, did you contribute fifty pounds to the building of our chapel at Grantham?"

"And pray, Mr. O'Meara," retorted Sir Cecil, "in what quality, *comme quoi*, do you convict me of inconsistency? *chacun à son gout;* and I wish all people to follow their taste in this world and take their chance for the next."

"It is hopeless for me to attempt to controvert such principles," said Bryan, with an air of affectionate regret.

"It is, O'Meara; at least, for the present. To return to our subject. Seriously, I did not wish, if you will forgive me the avowal, to make a gentleman of you. My observation has proved to me, what, I fear, your experience will prove to you—that 'gentlemen' are not more happy than those who are not so classed. To descend from the condition of a gentleman is, indeed, a severe and just cause of affliction: but *qui s'avise d'être malheureux de ne pas être roi, si ce n'est un roi détrôné?* I quote your favourite authority, Pascal, to support my opinion. However, in your case, the thing is done; done admirably well; and Mr. Piron and Mr. Harrison and all your friends witness the result of your education with entire satisfaction."

O'Meara bowed. Sir Cecil, after a short pause, went on:

"To make an adequate return," he said, "to the son of him who saved my son, is impossible: such a service cannot be subjected to any estimate. I request your acceptance of two thousand pounds. The friendly feeling with which it is offered, and my sincere regard for you, will, I hope, give the present some value in your sight."

Bryan testified his gratitude cordially, but with composure, and in no abject style.

"You are now," resumed Sir Cecil, smiling, "free from the devices of Harrison and the Abbé; for the interest of your money will be as good an income as that of the greater part of your Catholic clergy. You may like to buy a commission in the army?"

"Never, Sir," exclaimed Bryan, "till England and Ireland are free from all danger of collision. I would never be called on to act against my country."

"Perhaps you will enter one of the inns of court, and become a wrangling barrister?"

"That is not to my taste, Sir Cecil; and I am now independent," said Bryan, giving to his answer the tone of jocularity assumed by the baronet, who replied, "Nay, it is only a suggestion on my part: I disclaim all power to control." He added, "I shall always feel interested in whatever may concern you." Bryan, after repeating his expressions of gratitude, said he should wish to consult his mother on his future plans; and the conference ended.

He went into the library, where he found Charles Foxglove reclining in a large arm-chair, with his sprained leg on a high stool, and gave him a letter which Sir Cecil wished him to read, seal, and send to the post.

"It is," said Charles, "an order to our broker, to transfer to you three thousand pounds in the public funds."

"Sir Cecil spoke of two thousand," Bryan observed.

"It is worth," replied Charles, "at the present price of stocks, about four-and-twenty hundred pounds: but that is variable, and it will only bring you in ninety pounds a year. The last half-year's dividend is to be placed to your credit at the banker's. I wish it had been more; but my governor—"

"How often am I to entreat you not to call your father by that title?" interrupted Bryan.

"Pooh! it is the custom not only of 'dandies,' but of decorous, dutiful sons like me. Well; my father, I was going to say, is not rich—"

"I am perfectly satisfied," said Bryan; "and the more so, as you, my kind friend, have the generosity to concur."

"Nay; I am the last man that ought to object: it was for me that your poor father lost his life. You have been to his grave in the churchyard this morning, I will answer for you."

"I have," said Bryan with emotion.

"Well, my dear Bryan; as I was going to tell you, my father is not rich: he has presented you with about half a year's income. Twice that sum yearly is not more than sufficient to keep up our state as country gentlemen:

and our pretty little title, that makes my mother a lady, and gives Bella precedence before squires' wives, obliges us to maintain as much show as we are able. Indeed to tell you a secret, our two or three years' residence abroad was very convenient. Luckily, Bella had five thousand left her by a sister of our grandfather, which has been doubled during a long minority."

"I am most happy," replied Bryan, "that this bounty to me does not, in any way, trench on Miss Foxglove's fortune."

"Say no more about it, Bryan," said Charles, taking him kindly by the hand. "And now, what is your purpose? literary leisure, eh?"

"You *will* mistake my character, Charles; and fancy that, because I have passed six years in college, I must be a student. I *have* studied, and zealously. I hope I have furnished my mind with all that is necessary to any but a professional man. But in college, I always felt as if my legs were cramped and my hands tied."

"In my opinion," said Charles, "'much study is weariness of the flesh' was the wisest thing said by king Solomon. If, however, you have read enough, you may write—turn author."

"I might contribute to the periodicals," replied Bryan, "the only access to the public, and influence it in favour of Ireland; but more activity, more promptitude is wanting, than is supposed by such appeals. I will go and make myself acquainted with my dear country," he added, as his enthusiasm grew upon him. "To her cause I devote myself. I will assert her perfect equality with this domineering ascendancy nation, or—"

At this moment Sir Cecil entered the room.

"Father," cried Charles; "what do you think is Bryan's scheme? He is going to sell his monies out of the funds; to retire to Athlone, his native town, in the centre of Ireland; organize an insurrection; call around all *la jeunesse Irlandaise* from Ulster, Munster, Leinster, and Connaught; display the green flag, and march upon Dublin. You just hindered him from explaining his plan to me. I have divined it in part; and as it is a good cause, I am happy you have supplied the means."

Sir Cecil, without noticing his son's *badinage*—which he interpreted as his mode of signifying his assent in what had been done—said, "I did not tell you, Charles, of my intentions in regard to O'Meara, that you might not be responsible for deficiencies. I am glad that you approve of what has been done, and hope that now all parties are satisfied."

Bryan renewed his thanks to the baronet for having been better than his word, and for the manner in which he had placed this sum at his disposal.

"Yes; and you see, Sir, how he means to dispose of it," said Charles to his father. "Do you not see he is revolving in his mind the glorious enterprise?"

"Indeed, Bryan," said Sir Cecil, "considering the talk we have often heard from you, I may say, as the Marquis de ——— said to Colonel Despard:—'Monsieur, je suis surpris de voir que vous n'êtes pas encore pendu!'"

"Oh, that is to come," cried Charles; "we shall see him gazetted."

"Well," said Bryan, "Emmet was hanged; and even Orangemen honour his memory:—

'C'est le crime qui fait honte, et non pas le supplice.'"

"Well, cease this seditious discourse, Bryan;" said Sir Cecil; "there is a friend of yours walking near the lake: you had better go and join her."

Bryan apprehended immediately that he was advised to make his acknowledgments to Lady Foxglove. Arabella was with her: but as Sir Cecil had seen this, it was plain that he did not intend that her presence should be a hindrance to the mention of what had passed.

"I come, madam," he said, "to express my gratitude."

"Oh, do not mention it, Mr. O'Meara," said the lady, not very graciously interrupting him; "I certainly approved of our making some return for the great obligation we owed your father, and your loss in consequence."

"The ways of Providence are wonderful," replied

Bryan; "this is the very place—for your son has often pointed it out to me—where my father saved him from drowning: had not this accident befallen, I had been a poor uneducated peasant."

"But you lost your father," said Arabella, with much feeling.

"I did, indeed; but infancy and my mother's care made me insensible to the loss. Whether cultivation of intellect and refinement of mind be a source of happiness or of misery, I have yet to try. For what I am reserved, I know not. But here," he added, stooping and taking up some water in the hollow of his hand, and letting it fall again into the lake, "here began for me a new destiny, and here also begins for me a new course of life and events. I return, like this pure element, to the mass from which I have been separated."

The action was theatrical; but Arabella pardoned it in favour of the high excitement by which he was agitated. He gazed on her, but immediately withdrew his look. Lady Foxglove was no enthusiast; she quietly said, "I am sure, Mr. O'Meara, I very heartily wish you all happiness. Sir Cecil tells me that your clergy are so poorly provided for, that even if you should be settled anywhere as a priest, what he has done for you will be, by no means, superfluous."

"Madam," said Bryan, "I am not to be a priest."

Arabella involuntarily started and shuddered; but the movement was not perceived.

"The Abbé Piron and Mr. Harrison have always," continued he, "proposed to me the ecclesiastical state as my profession: it was my duty to them to endeavour to comply with their purpose; and—I know not whether I ought to trouble your ladyship with the detail—I remained in college two years after I had finished what is called the 'humanities'—classics and literature. During those two years, I was what I certainly am not now, if tranquil feelings be essential to the character—a philosopher: such is the college term. It became necessary for me to decide whether I would begin my course of theology preparatory to holy orders. I humbly hope I am not deficient in zeal for the service of God. I would sacrifice life and all that is most

dear to me to the cause of truth:—this is not boasting, for such is simply the right which our Creator has over us."

Arabella trembled; "Can I say this?" thought she; but she suppressed her emotion.

"After an impartial scrutiny of my own character, however," Bryan continued, "I fear I could not bear the awful responsibility, the laborious confinement of a priest's condition. I will own, too, do not reprove me, I would be free to aid my country in case of need—too likely to occur."

Lady Foxglove replied by some civil but insignificant phrases. Arabella was silent; and the two ladies went into the house. Bryan seated himself on the turf; looked fixedly on the lake; and was lost in perturbed thought.

"Her mother could not understand me: I knew it: but I talked for *her* and to *her* alone. What interest she betrayed in all that regarded me! Were I her equal, I might be sure of her favourable sentiments, even to the point to which it would be rashness and folly for one in my condition to think of aspiring. Nay, it would be worse than folly to indulge, to permit myself such a hope. I have been admitted into this family in the confidence that such a project could never be entertained by me: that such an union was absolutely forbidden by our relative situations. The least endeavour on my part to accomplish such a purpose would be dishonourable; nay, worse; it would now, since this fatal present has been conferred, take the colouring of ingratitude. Yet could I but tell her how I admire, how I love her! Vain; hopeless, hopeless! I scarce dare whisper it to myself; and to what purpose should I make it known to her? The declaration would be rejected by offended pride, or received with unavailing sympathy. Dear, respected object of my—my regret, your peace shall never be disturbed by me!"

Arabella had retired to her dressing-room, where she pondered on what had been said and looked by Bryan.

"Compare him," for she also had her soliloquies,

"compare him with other young men—of fashion—of the world! with a Walton for example, by no means an unfair specimen of his class. How superior is he in principle, in talent, in elevation of mind! What would he be with one-half of Walton's advantage in fortune and station! But what does he mean by mingling again with those to whom he belonged by his origin? He is now above the necessity of labour—above poverty. And what did he mean by talking of his zeal for truth? Does he suspect the state of my mind in regard to the faith in which I was brought up, and mean it as an exhortation? And the sacrifice that he would make of all that was dear to him? What sacrifice has he to make?" And the thought then occurred to her that he might mean the sacrifice of his affections if placed on one not professing true religion, or one who should require him to renounce that truth as a condition of acceptance.

A tremor passed over her. She became, for the first time, aware of the impressions that had been made on her by the virtues, the accomplishments, the manners and appearances—of whom? of a poor Irish peasant boy. During his residence in college and her absence on the Continent, she had not seen him for five years. During the two short visits he had paid in the neighbourhood within the last twelve months, he was considered as destined to the ecclesiastical state; though he himself had declared that he reserved that point for his own future decision. He had now decided. That obstacle was removed. Arabella did justice to him and to herself, by wishing that there were no other; but she contemplated the scornful refusal of her parents' consent: their renunciation of her as a daughter: the alienation of her brother's affection: the censure that would be passed upon her by her family and all her connections.

"My favourable opinion of him is just," said she to her only confident—herself; "but whatever be his merit, this must go no further."

An hour after mid-day, they met at the usual repast. Both were mutually embarrassed; both, however, by

constraint appeared to be at ease so far that the parents and the brother of Arabella conceived not the least suspicion of what they had never thought of as within the range or course of possible events.

"Sir Cecil," said Bryan, "I will beg the favour of you to lend me a horse; I wish to call on Mr. Harrison."

"I will drive you there myself, if you please," replied the Baronet. "Or you shall drive me, as more seemly for a young man. You are a good whip: at least, Harrison used to trust you; and his neck is worth more than mine."

"Mr. Harrison is a bachelor, Sir Cecil," remarked Lady Foxglove.

"That is no reason he should have his neck broke, Miladi," rejoined her husband; "though I believe the women think bachelors good for nothing else. Harrison is a better man than I, therefore his neck is worth more than mine."

Arabella forced herself to say, "I hope Mr. O'Meara will take care: for breaking a man's neck would be a strange way of providing for his moral improvement."

"Not more strange than fire and faggot, which you Papists are so fond of."

"Oh, spare me, Sir Cecil," replied Bryan. "I am only a profane layman, you know. I appeal to Abbé Piron."

"I do not suspect either you or the Abbé of any inflammatory propensities. And besides, our party ought to have been more innocent than it has been, to have a right to reproach yours. But perhaps Bella thinks a leap from a gibbet a more edifying way of breaking a neck than a fall from a curricle."

"That lesson we reserve," said Charles, "to correct the politically inflammatory propensities and provide for the moral improvement of that arch-rebel, Bryan O'Meara."

"Let us leave these people," said Sir Cecil to Bryan, "here is my lady-wife desiring my safety only for the sake of herself and children: Bella implying that I *do* want a moral lesson, though she does not like that which you shall have the means of giving: and Charles dooming you to the death of a traitor only for love of the

Emerald Isle. I say, Erin go brah! Ring the bell, Bryan. I will order the carriage."

Sir Cecil had done a benevolent act, and felt a present flow of good spirits.

CHAPTER XVI.

Mr. Harrison was the only son of a dignitary of the Church by law established. He had been destined from his infancy to his father's profession; and though that father died while his son was yet in his boyhood, he was sent, at the usual age, to the university of Cambridge, where, in due time, he took the degree of Bachelor of Arts, and then entered on some studies preparatory to his being a candidate at the next ordination. These studies were protracted by a suspicion that rose in his mind, during the course of them, that the change of religion in this country had been adopted to suit the purposes or convenience of the civil powers. He related to Sir Cecil Foxglove, some years afterwards, "I met with a little book, entitled 'Fifty Good Reasons, by the Duke of Brunswick, for abjuring Lutheranism,'—do not be afraid; I am not going to enumerate them! but at the end of this book, were two letters by the Duchess of York, wife of James II. Women have a knack of seeing at once, what reasoners puzzle themselves about. She says, 'England would have been Catholic at this day, but for the bigamy of Henry VIII, the infancy of Edward VI, and the illegitimacy of Elizabeth;' and she adds: 'It is very odd the bishops could not find out that the Catholic Church was in error, till the king or queen ordered them to make the discovery.' These remarks," continued Harrison, "suggested to me a doubt, which I endeavoured to clear up by referring to the early fathers and divines of the Gallican Church. I ended by reconciling myself to our ancient mother, abjuring all heresy and schism."

"But there is a previous question," insinuated the Baronet, "which your education prevented you from discussing."

"True; I admit the fact. But I have discussed it

since. I affirm that the existence of the Jewish people and of the Catholic Church, without supposing the truth of Revelation, would be a greater miracle than all the miracles recorded as confirming or attesting that revelation. Pascal also shewed me the conformity of that revelation to the interior nature, the spiritual wants of man."

On his conversion, Mr. Harrison retired to his estate at Willoughby. He built for himself a house of a moderate size, for he proposed to himself a life of celibacy. His mother lived with him till her death, a few years afterwards; she was of an illustrious and ancient Catholic family, that, in the last generation only, had conformed to the established religion. Her son found no difficulty in inducing her to return to the faith of her forefathers; and she died in that faith.

He was now in his fifty-seventh year; and had resided in the neighbourhood for thirty years, with the reputation of an honourable and benevolent man: and was as well liked as reserved habits and a studious way of life permitted. He had early formed an intimacy with Sir Cecil Foxglove, and visited frequently at Denham. The two friends differed on the most important points of religious truth: but neither of them domineered; for the law had not sanctioned either the professed faith of Mr. Harrison, nor the half-concealed opinions of the Baronet. The former had of late occupied himself in reducing into order a moral and political theory, which the latter professed to admire, as the true mode of doing away all anomalies in legislation and civil government. They were, each in his peculiar way, estimable men, and very good friends.

When Sir Cecil and Bryan arrived at Mr. Harrison's, they found the Abbé Piron with him. "I have brought this young man," said the Baronet after a friendly greeting, "to receive his jobation for the disappointment he has inflicted on you both; he tells me that he had only time to intimate it to you last evening. I have to call at the bank at Grantham, and will be back in three-quarters of an hour. I hope that will be a sufficient space for him to be killed and brought to life again,—after the manner of his country."

"It is sport to you, Sir Cecil," said the Abbé; "but,—"

"Do not take the matter so seriously, my dear sir," returned the Baronet. "You know that he can have no wrong motive. But I am intruding on what I ought to leave to yourselves," he added, and drove off from the door, attended by his groom.

"You have, indeed, inflicted on me a severe disappointment, my dear Bryan," the Abbé said. "I had hoped that you would have assisted me, when unable, as I shall soon be, to perform my functions of pastor, and have succeeded me in them."

Mr. Harrison evidently felt a degree of sorrow, which he would not express lest he should aggravate the distress of Mr. Piron.

"My most kind and respected friends," said Bryan, after a painful pause, "you both of you know the motives which ought to induce any one to devote himself to this awful duty, and accept this high privilege. You will both of you make allowance for the character and dispositions which may make me, if not unworthy,—I humbly hope I am not so unhappy,—but unsuited. I entreat your indulgence, your favourable construction: Sir Cecil has done me justice in saying that I have no unworthy motive; and believe, I pray you, that the love of God does not the less rule in my heart, because I decline, with all reverence, to dedicate myself to the service of His altar.

"I stand here," he added, "as a culprit before the friends of my infancy and of my youth, and I will not sit down till I have received from them my acquittal."

They were moved; each extended a hand to him, in token that his apology was accepted. Abbé Piron said, "I will trust in the providence which orders all with a prescience of futurity not granted to mortal men. May you save your own soul; and may your example be an encouragement, a light to direct others in the path of truth and virtue."

Mr. Harrison now observed: "Your education has not been thrown away, Bryan. I always have been, and am still sensible of your merit in having turned it to so good an account. Your acquirements will enable you to act with good effect on the minds of others, to the purpose recommended to you by the Abbé. Our clergy, in this country, cannot be suspected of interested motives; but

in every country, they are regarded by the thoughtless as swayed by a professional bias, as separated from the concerns of ordinary life, and as advising what is compatible with their own condition only. This is an unhappy misapprehension: for all are equally bound to live for the glory of God, the end for which he has given us all our being."

Bryan O'Meara now acquainted them with the donation of Sir Cecil Foxglove; and then, with the ardour of a young mind not yet debauched by the habitual possession of wealth, he said to Mr. Harrison, "My first care, sir, ought to be to return what has been expended in my education at college."

Mr. Harrison was silent a few moments, with the air of one accustomed to weigh and measure an affront before he should resent it.

"I am persuaded you do *not* mean to insult me, Bryan," at length he said.

"My dear sir," hastily resumed the latter in great alarm, "in paying my pension, you intended to give money for pious uses; these having failed from your choice of a reluctant subject, the money ought to be returned, that you may find one who will fulfil your intentions. I did not suppose that, having once so destined it, you would take it back with any other view."

"Now that you are tolerably rational, Bryan, we will argue the point. If I had not sent you to college, you would have been the cause of the same expense to me in some other way."

"I do not know that, sir," said Bryan; "I might have gained my own livelihood. You would hardly have kept a great idle boy in your house."

"I do not know that. I should be very glad if you would stay and live with me at present."

"You have ever been as a father to me, my dear sir," replied O'Meara much moved; "but my mother desires me to come to her in Ireland, now that I am free to take the journey. She writes that my grandfather is not likely to survive this winter, and that he wishes to see, before he dies, the son of his poor Albert."

"Be it so," said Mr. Harrison. "Bryan, your mother deserves a good son. But what say you, Abbé," he con-

tinued, "to this case of conscience? I certainly intended the money for pious uses."

"And I," cried Bryan, "have defrauded that use."

"I think," said Mr. Piron, "that both of you are too scrupulous; and that, like honest men, each of you puts his case at a disadvantage. The payment of the pension was simply an act of friendship; an expense incurred with a knowledge of the uncertainty of obtaining the object hoped for; and no condition of fulfilling that object was agreed to, or even required of the other party."

Neither party was quite satisfied with this judgment; and Bryan resolved to give the sum of his pension to his poor brethren of Ireland—persecuted, plundered, impoverished avowedly as "papists," and compelled to pay tithe and build churches for the maintenance of a new religion.

The conversation was conducted on various topics relative to the concerns and feelings they had in common, till the return of Sir Cecil within the allotted time.

"Well, I see by your looks," he said on entering, "that you are all friends."

"With him, but not with you," replied Mr. Harrison. "You have rendered him independent of us; you have acted like him of the French revolution, who turned a church into a secular building, *pour escamoter une église au bon Dieu.*"

"Why, you scandalous calumniator," retorted Sir Cecil, "you know that he told you his purpose last night, and I did not talk on business with him till this morning. Your vile purpose was to force him into a surrender of his liberty."

"Never! never!" exclaimed the Abbé and Mr. Harrison at once.

"No," said Sir Cecil, "I do not believe you capable of it. I only wish to retort upon you all, who accuse me of inconsistency; I am not inconsistent. I wished, by my munificence, added to the immense revenues he would derive from his succession to the Abbé's benefice, to make him lazy and fat and useless. This was the scheme I had formed for counteracting your purpose; but to prove to you, Harrison, that you have been guilty of a wicked rash judgment, I will tell you that the sum I mentioned to

Bryan this morning, was bought into the funds some years ago, in his name. If the price of stock has since risen, so much the better for him."

"In further proof that Sir Cecil's bounty had nothing to do with my resolve," interposed O'Meara, "be pleased to observe that it was, of course, made known to the superiors of the college, when I took leave of them finally."

"Sir Cecil is a better friend to the true faith," Mr. Piron said, "than many of those who believe it in part. He wants but one thing to make him consistent."

"I know what you mean, Abbé; and I promise you that, when I turn believer, I will believe the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth."

While all this was passing at Willoughby, Dr. Fullarton and Mr. Walton were paying a visit at Denham, where Lady Foxglove and her daughter were relieving, by their company the compulsory idleness of Charles. Arabella would have retired on the approach of the visitors; but she said to herself, "It is useless to avoid him. The sooner it begins, the sooner it will be over. If his purpose be what I suspect, he would make for himself other opportunities."

In fact, the impression that Walton had made on her mind was by no means favourable. With a handsome person, graceful converse, vivacity of manners, and sufficient instruction, Arabella judged him to be one of the vulgar great; one who loved wealth for the sake of its display, and who was ready to avail himself, to the utmost, of the advantages it afforded him to gain power, and the homage of others; one who was unconsciously, because sustained by general example and corrected by no disapprobation, proud, selfish, unfeeling: one who adopted the conventional morals of high life, without seeming to suspect the existence of a loftier principle of truth and justice.

As Mr. Walton's visit was professedly intended for her brother, Arabella had only to seem to take him at his word. She mingled occasionally, and with perfect ease of manner, in the conversation that ensued, adopting, however, towards Walton, an air of unsuspicious indifference, and trusting that his insensibility would save him from all mortification, save that of his pride. Nor was

the conversation at first, such as could particularly interest ladies: the two young men talked of the times they had passed together at the university, and were scarcely restrained by the presence of the Archdeacon from testifying the contempt they felt for those venerable asylums of overgrown boys.

"Reading!" exclaimed Charles, in answer to some observation made by his mother; "oh, yes: I read everything except what was recommended to me."

"But I was a good boy; I fagged very hard," said Walton; "did I not, Mr. Archdeacon?"

This appeal was answered by a half-satisfied attestation of his pupil's diligence.

"Nay," resumed Walton, "I read a confounded deal of Greek, in my two last years!"

"And what good will it do you?" asked Charles. "Do you mean to make speeches in Greek to the worthy and independent electors of the borough of Grantham?"

"And pray, Foxglove, why do you suspect me of intending to make speeches to them in any language?"

"It must be done in some language, for form's sake, Walton, when you are a candidate for the honour of representing them in Parliament. Come, confess the purport of your secret aside with Mr. Welwyn."

Walton was not displeased at this guess on the part of Charles; and indirectly gave him to understand that he was in the right in his conjecture, by saying,—

"To be sure, I had not the pleasure of meeting Mr. Welwyn, before yesterday; but I am much pleased with him as a very sensible man of business. I shall be most happy in whatever may connect me with such an agreeable neighbourhood as this."

This hint roused the attention of Lady Foxglove. She resorted to some of the usual matronly manœuvres to draw the attention of the stranger from her son to her daughter; and in these, the Archdeacon joined with so little skill as to arouse the impassive resistance of Arabella against what she felt to be a preconcerted plot against herself. The match-makers had made but little progress, when Sir Cecil and O'Meara returned from their drive.

Mr. Walton now shewed himself particularly respectful in his address to the Baronet; and went to the very verge

of haughtiness in his behaviour to Bryan. He talked again of the neighbourhood; mentioned some very agreeable families to whom he had been introduced that morning; and asked Charles concerning two or three packs of fox-hounds within his reach.

"You live here, Mr. O'Meara, do you not?" he then said to our hero.

"I am at present, on a visit to my friend, Mr. Foxglove."

Dr. Fullarton, who had profited so far by William of Wykeham's motto, "Manners makyth man," was never rude unless he intended to be so: on the present occasion, however, he could not repress the sincerity which so far overcame him, that, when he said, "I hope for the pleasure of seeing you on Monday," he felt compelled to add, "with the family."

"I shall be happy to accompany them," Bryan replied.

The Archdeacon saw that he was understood; and, thenceforward, thought the young Irishman worthy of more civility.

On taking leave, Mr. Walton requested Charles to give his opinion of his pair of bays. "For I think them a very fine team," he added, looking to the ladies. This appeal procured him the triumph of being accompanied to the door by the ladies as well as the gentlemen; and he evidently gloried in having extorted this attention from the reluctant Arabella.

During the remainder of the day, Sir Cecil and Charles behaved to Bryan, not as if no benefit had been conferred upon him,—that would have been an affectation little worthy of the father, as a man of strong sense, or of the son, a man, if not of equal force of mind, yet of greater sensibility,—but as if they derived satisfaction from their own relation to him as his benefactors. Charles even corrected the usual carelessness of his bearing, by exhibiting a degree of deference towards Bryan, as if to encourage him to assert his new position as an independent man. Lady Foxglove was very condescending; for, she wished, in all politeness, to compel him to appear to acknowledge the obligation he had received. With this, as a matter of course, Arabella had no concern; her mind was full of the

discovery, forced upon her by the excited discourse of Bryan,—that she preferred him to any man whom she had ever seen. This sentiment she endeavoured to bring within the limit of reason, and to regard it as a simple tribute of just consideration. She behaved to him with equal kindness, but with something more of reserve.

Bryan, in all the cheerfulness and simplicity of youth, exhibited the contentment which every young man must feel at being his own master, and the conviction that he owed this new and untried advantage to his friends. Even Lady Foxglove allowed that he was a grateful young man. A cloud sometimes passed across his mind: but without hope, what is love? In its last stage, it may be despair; but in its commencement, unconfirmed by the encouragement of her who is its object, or by cherished indulgence of meditation on that object, it may yield to prudence and to a sense of duty. Our hero was able to resolve, as he thought in good time, to subdue a perilous and perturbing inclination.

CHAPTER XVII.

The next morning after breakfast, Sir Cecil said to his lady, as soon as they were in private, "What do you think of this Walton?"

"A very great match for Bella."

"He is a handsome fellow," said Sir Cecil, looking in the mirror as he past by it; for Sir Cecil also had been a handsome fellow in his youth.

"He has twelve thousand a year," said the lady.

"Perhaps eight."

"That is always your way, Sir Cecil."

"Always is an objectionable word. Pray, how old is this habit of mine, of reducing things to their just estimate?"

"Do not let us dispute, Sir Cecil; I presume we are both of us interested for Bella. Eight thousand would be enough."

"Yes; such an enough as that, would be as good as a feast: but enough is always a little more than a man has."

"He is of a very good old Saxon family," said the lady; "more ancient than you Norman D'Enhams."

"It is lucky your family is of Saxon origin, my lady; else you might perchance have been ignorant of that point of chronology," answered the husband; and the conference was, for awhile, suspended.

The lady resumed. "Let us talk quietly, Sir Cecil; Mr. Walton is staying in the country to pay his addresses: Mrs. Fullarton told me so; if you mean to permit them, you must give him opportunities."

"They are to meet on Monday," said the baronet; "and they met on Thursday last."

"Yes, but on that day we did not invite him; if we mean to shew that we approve of it;"—the *it* was quite intelligible,—"we must give him an invitation."

"What! another dinner? Spare me: spare me."

"No, Sir Cecil; another dinner would be in bad taste. But he has talked of a sail on the lake, and mentioned it again yesterday."

"Well, he is welcome to get into the boat, and sail about as much as he pleases."

"What, alone?"

"What *are* you going to propose? let me hear the worst at once."

"A water-party, a sort of a regatta, a—a dejeuné à la fourchette." The baronet started. "Now, my dear Cecil, be reasonable, we have done nothing beyond the common, since our return from the continent. It shall be contrived as a compliment to the Hawkes also; and Charles will be well enough to walk a quadrille with Clara, and it will forward that business."

"It will require time for preparation, and invitation; a party of that sort must be numerous,——and the expense"—

"What are lakes good for, if they are only to be looked at?" asked the lady.

"To drown one's children in," said Sir Cecil; we narrowly escaped *that*—poor Albert O'Meara!"

"I am sure it has been a lucky affair for his son!" the

lady replied; and Sir Cecil was so much disgusted, that he would discuss the matter no longer, but cried out, "Take your own way, Lady Foxglove."

Sir Cecil repaired to his son's sofa, to consult with him on the suit of Mr. Walton. To Charles, a splendid establishment, an ample jointure, and good connexions, appeared very desirable; and the alliance was agreed to in advance, by all except one of the family; the party most concerned.

"Better say nothing of the matter to Arabella," said Charles; "to give her any intimation of it, would only be to set her on finding faults in the man. If he proposes to her, she will of course refer him to you; if to you in the first instance, you know how to act."

"That the proposal will be made," said the father, "I have not the least doubt. I do not place any reliance on Mrs. Fullarton; she may speak from the mere love of gossiping: nor yet on his stay in the country, for he may have a view to the borough of Grantham, and wish to make himself known. But I observed how angry he looked, when you and O'Meara came into the dining-room: he knew one from the other, by your limping. He behaves to me as a man behaves to his future father-in-law, and treats poor Bryan very disdainfully, as if to revenge himself for his former jealousy."

"That is not the word, sir," observed the son; "for I do not think he is or ever will be in love; Arabella is a fine woman to do the honours of his house, and a man of property must marry to have heirs."

"I wish you would think of that on your own account, Charles; you have kept Clara a long time in expectation."

"She is young, sir; you did not marry till you were thirty. I am four years younger."

"And if you should fall from your horse when out a hunting, and break your neck, what becomes of the title and estate?"

"The one would be extinct, the other would be as fertile and productive as ever."

"And the woods be cut down, and the house a ruin; Charles, seriously, I wish you would marry."

"I will think of it, sir."

"If Clara Hawke is too gentle for you," insisted the anxious father, "what think you of the hoyden buoyancy of Lady Charlotte Baudoin; for I presume you would not admire the touching melancholy of Lady Caroline?"

"No one can tell what either of them will be, when married," observed Charles; "at present they are both of them in masquerade; a sweet contrast, as their mamma says."

"You are a saucy fellow, Charles. But I must leave you; I have much to do."

He was prevented from leaving the room, by the entrance of his lady, and Arabella, and Bryan. "Oh, Sir Cecil!" said the lady, "we have settled every thing for the party."

"Why, you have not even invited your guests."

"But here is a list of them."

"Mr. O'Meara has proposed," said Arabella, "a tent on the lawn for the *déjeuné;* and then, archery."

"Yes; bows and arrows, and a target," said Bryan.

"You are all mad; bitten, stark staring mad," cried the baronet.

"And pray, good gentlefolks," said Charles, in a whining tone, "may I be permitted to know what all this means?"

When an explanation had been given by his father, in no very good humour, Charles asked, "Where did you acquire your taste for rural festivities, Bryan? I thought you had been shut up in a college for these some years past."

"It was precisely there that I conceived the felicitous ideas which I have taken the liberty at this time, and on this occasion, of submitting to Lady Foxglove," said Bryan, with an assumed air of importance. "In the second summer of my collegiate life, when I was compelled to reside there, during what is most fitly called the *long* vacation; there was a splendid pic-nic on the hills within an hour's walk of us. Half a score of the youth, the hope of this and the sister island, were led forth by our superior. We stood at a respectful distance; but from the clatter within the tent we guessed what cheer was going on. Presently a circular frame of canvas, marked with concentric circles, was placed on the level green; the

cavaliers and the dames—but I fear I tire you. While we stood watching the sport, two servants brought us cakes and fruit, and we exchanged a bow at a distance, —a very different thing from a distant bow,—with some gentlemen who stood before the tent with the official dignity of stewards."

"You shall be steward here, an' ye will, Bryan," said Sir Cecil, "and take the trouble off my hands, since Charles is lame."

"You do me great honour, Sir Cecil; and, in virtue of my office, I decide that there shall be archery. We philosophers—your ladyship knows what sort of philosophers are meant—rejecting the boyish play of fives and foot-ball, frequently practised archery as a relaxation from our severer studies; and may I own it! I should be much pleased to have an opportunity of proving to Mr. Walton that the poor despised Irishman can aim better at a mark than himself."

The obvious and simple sense alone of these words occurred to all but Arabella; she suspected a metaphor; and conscience that "makes cowards of us all," told her that this secondary, the poetical interpretation, was not unfounded. But would Bryan dare, in the presence of her family, even thus covertly to hint at sentiments which it was not permitted to him to entertain, and vaunt of success, too, of which he had not received the slightest assurance? Bold as his character evidently was, this was improbable. Yet the thought occurred; and Arabella, to hide any symptom of confusion that she might have betrayed, said, "Indeed, Mr. O'Meara, I do not wonder you should resent Mr. Walton's behaviour to you; he was very uncivil yesterday, and very assuming."

"I suppose," said Lady Foxglove, "he thinks he has a right to assume."

"What belongs to himself, mamma; but not to refuse what others are entitled to. But Mr. O'Meara will make allowance for his misapprehension."

"I thank you for reproving me, Miss Foxglove," said Bryan; "I have been very wrong; I will endeavour to curb myself."

This too was enigmatical; but Arabella struggled with herself, not to desire the solution of the enigma.

Sir Cecil now said; "Bryan, you shall drive me out again to-day: I must make some visits and call at Grantham to give orders for the *fête champêtre*, since you and my lady will have it so." As soon as they were in the carriage and had proceeded a little way, he said "We must call at the Archdeacon's, I know you do not like Walton; and I cannot blame you: but before he knew who you were, he thought you might have rival pretensions; he will conduct himself towards you, now, with more cordiality."

The implication contained in this speech, and the carelessness with which it was uttered, had a stunning effect on Bryan. Why this? He had before arrived at the conclusion that, with or without a rival, he could not himself be a pretender to Arabella; but his understanding and his heart were in opposition to each other. The baronet continued; "I make no scruple of hinting at this matter to you; all the world will talk about it ere long; besides, I consider you as an *ami de la maison*."

This ground of confidence did not mend the matter; and Sir Cecil was obliged to call out, "What are you about? You will overturn us in the ditch."

Had Arabella seen him drive this day, she would have had reason to be alarmed for her father's safety. Bryan recalled his scattered spirits; for attention was indispensable.

They arrived, without accident, at the Archdeacon's. Walton was so much flattered by the excess of civility, on the part of the Denham family, that he yielded to the persuasion of Dr. and Mrs. Fullarton, to prolong his stay till the Saturday following, the day of the *fête*. Mr. Walton's manner towards our hero was now altered; he asserted his superiority by great condescension; to this he had been advised by the sagacious Mrs. Fullarton; 'He is a favourite at Denham; you will injure your cause by being rude to him." The change, uncaused, uncalled for, assured Bryan of the insincerity of the man; and he, of course, felt this mode to be more contemptuous than his former arrogance.

Other visits were paid; but we need not further follow our hero and his kind patron.

In the course of this morning, Arabella took her place by the sofa of her reclining brother, and announced to him, as a half-formed project, the wish of her father and the consent of her mother and herself, to a renewed residence on the Continent, for a year or two; "And they will give up the hall to you, Charles, for that time, provided you will bring into it a wife worthy of the mansion."

"As to the hall," said her brother, "there is no temptation in that part of your scheme sufficient to counter-balance the condition annexed; it would be more economical to reduce the establishment here, as was done in our former absence. Whenever I marry, I can take a hunting-box at Grantham; there are always two or three to be let every winter for the sake of the fox-hounds."

"Then you will go with us, Charles?"

"Yes; I have no objection to a winter at Paris, or any of the Italian capitals."

"Then you lose your hunting."

"Well; here, in the country, one has no resource but to fatigue oneself in the morning that one may be stupid enough for the evening; but where one can have society, or the theatre in the evening, one may be contented to lounge away the morning; so you see, Bella, I have escaped from your snare."

"And what good does the escape, for the present, bring with it? You do not mean to delay, till you will be obliged to say, 'Better late than never?' That is only for us poor damsels, who cannot suit ourselves while in our bloom."

"You say truly, Bella; and pray, who is this lady, 'worthy of the mansion,' whom your senate, conservative of the family descent, desires to propose to me? My father mentioned Clara, for the hundreth time, this morning."

"She has been mentioned to you too often, Charles; if you were now to see Clara Hawke, for the the first time, I think you would like her."

"I dare say I should; she is very pretty, and well-mannered, and sweet-tempered, and all that sort of thing."

"Well; and why do you not like her?"

"She is too—too monotonous;—too much like any other young lady; and, to tell you the truth, though I do not believe she would refuse me, I do not think she has any particular preference."

"My dear brother, make allowance for circumstances; the long friendship of our two families; the suitableness of your ages; the talk and expectation of the neighbourhood—all operate as a check on Clara; she is afraid of appearing to you as if she wished to avail herself of them; while you are afraid of compromising yourself by attentions; since, under these very circumstances, a retreat would be more difficult than with a casual acquaintance. If she cared nothing about you, she would be more at her ease and shew more character. I will advise her to pique you by a little jealousy, by setting her cap, as they used to say when we wore caps—at this Mr. Walton, for example."

This gave a new turn to the conversation; for Charles could not help looking with curiosity at his sister.

"I know what you mean," she said. "I should know Walton's intention better than our parents or yourself; he would be but a bad wooer if I did not."

"Well then, now, Bella, it is my turn. How do you like Walton?"

"At present, by no means; I would not decide at once against one whom our dear parents approve of, as well as yourself, my dear brother; but I think you favour him only because he would be what the world would call a good match; you know very little more of him than his situation in life."

"And what more would you know?" asked Charles.

"His principles; his temper; the goodness of his heart; and his associates."

"His principles are those of a man of honour; and he associates with Dr. Fullarton."

"No jesting, Charles."

"Jesting! It would be a bad jest for you to refuse such an establishment—"

"I want no establishment."

"Aye, there it is; you are independent: and with three

or four hundred a year you may have a house at Grantham, and a foot-boy, in the Foxglove livery, to carry your prayer-book to church, and open the pew-door. Do not be angry, dear Bella, though I am, for I love you dearly; but you really are too difficult: the first thing you did after our return from abroad, was to refuse Lord Orril; at least, you discouraged him from offering."

"Lord Orril! you would not have wished me to encourage such a simpleton. But I see how it is; you may be as difficult as you please, while I—"

"Well, and the reason is because women cannot take their choice as men can; but must choose among those who offer."

"They would be greater fools than you think them, Charles, if, for that reason, they chose ill."

"But this Walton would not be an ill choice."

"*Reste-à-savoir*, brother. I will not choose any one whose moral and intellectual qualities do not command my esteem."

At the dessert, after dinner, this day, Sir Cecil Foxglove amused himself by an ironical attack on revelation: he was seconded by his son; and the humour was contrived to be perfectly intelligible to Arabella and O'Meara; while it was not broad enough to be apprehended by the somewhat obtuse apprehension of Lady Foxglove, who unsuspiciously lent her aid to the raillery, by joining in the affected lamentation that places of worship were attended chiefly by females.

"It is quite shocking," said the baronet: "one would infer that the men have found out that religion is false, and only go to church for form's sake."

"Perhaps," said Charles, "the teachers of all sorts of religions, find that women are more easily to be persuaded of the truth of a miraculous story; more fond of the marvellous; less inclined to examine."

Arabella thought that no inference could be drawn from the greater number of women than of men, in places of worship; for that the same disproportion was observable in all other public assemblies—at balls, theatres, and even private parties; and she repelled, with spirit, the insinuation that women were more credulous than

men. and less capable of examining the grounds of their belief.

"I never said they were less capable," cried Sir Cecil; "seriously, I believe the original faculties of understanding are equal in both sexes."

"I believe so, too," said Charles; "but, in point of fact, women do take religion on trust, and are more attached to it than the men."

"Admit the fact, Miss Foxglove," said O'Meara; he addressed himself to her, without knowing how deeply she was then engaged in a theological inquiry, but assured that she was, what her father and brother were not, one who received what had been taught her in this matter: "Admit the fact. How, unless upon trust, is the great bulk of mankind to take their religion? Its truth or its falsehood does not depend on the mental powers of those who adhere to it, but on the authority from which it proceeds; by which it is given to man. That the powers of the mind are equal in the two sexes no man can doubt; but women inquire in this affair of religion less than men do; let this be granted,—it does not prove them to be in the wrong. They also love religion more than men do; this does not proceed from constitutional imbecility or timidity; for, I assert it, women have more moral courage than men; but they are less turned aside from it by affairs; less tempted by pleasure; they are, moreover, more affectionate, more grateful than men; they have more sensibility."

"Excuse my interrupting you, Mr. O'Meara," said Arabella; "I do not think we have more sensibility, only it is more permitted to us to shew it; nor do I believe we have more gratitude; but we are less hindered by interested motives from shewing it. I doubt, too, our claim to a greater share of moral courage, for which you give us credit,—at least, our religious devotions do not prove it; for though the men laugh at us for our weakness and superstition, we should incur their serious displeasure if we had the hardihood that they have, of making a parade of our indifference or incredulity."

"At any rate, let the fact be admitted," said O'Meara; "females are more devout than men; no impeachment of the truth of religion can be drawn from the fact so fully

recognized by the Church, which has awarded the title of 'the devout female sex,' in its public office. Catholics know how to appreciate this truly amiable and exalted quality in woman; insomuch, that one who visited at Mr. Harrison's, declared he would rather that his daughter should marry a Protestant, than that his son should run the same risk, as the son would be more likely to be alienated from his religion than the daughter."

"Would you marry a Protestant, Mr. O'Meara?" asked Lady Foxglove.

The question was a blow of the same sort as the impossibility of rival pretentions, spoken of by Sir Cecil in the morning; but Bryan was now better prepared. Why did Arabella feel an interest in what would be the answer?—It would explain, perhaps, what was his meaning when he had talked of sacrifices: but how explain it? She was not long in suspense; for Bryan replied, without hesitation,—

"Certainly, madam, I would not object to marry a Protestant; and, if I may be permitted to say it, I do not think any Catholic would, by so doing, endanger his faith."

"You mean," said Charles, "that you are all so confoundedly bigoted."

"Even so; that is exactly my meaning, Charles."

"You would bring up your children in your own way?" asked Lady Foxglove.

"Certainly, madam: such is the duty and the right of the father, as head of the family."

"What, all of them?"

"To partition them off betwixt truth and falsehood would be a most scandalous compromise: both the religions cannot be true."

"But both may be false," said the Baronet.

"That is not the case supposed, Sir Cecil: but certainly such an agreement would imply that such was the opinion of the parents."

"Now," pursued the Baronet, "since Catholic women are more steadfast in the faith even than the men, you would allow them to take Protestant husbands: in that case, what is to become of the souls of the poor children?"

O'Meara replied, "I would not advise any Catholic woman to marry a Protestant, unless he would intrust the souls of his children to her care."

"And this is your reciprocity."

"Nay, Sir Cecil; the parties are free before marriage, and may agree on what terms they please."

In the evening music was proposed; and Bryan, saying to Charles, "You have a very low opinion of me: you do not know half my accomplishments," went out of the room, and returned, bringing a small square box, in which was enclosed a clarionet.

"Among indulgent friends," said he, "I may try;" and he played the air, 'O pescator dell' onda,' with taste and execution that called forth the surprise and praises of his hearers.

"Mr. Harrison," he added, "had great difficulty in keeping me at college, for the last two years; I was very idle,—this pipe is a proof of it: but, with the help of a promised journey to Italy, it was my solace; in imagination, I was ever on the banks of the Tiber or of the Shannon. And when I am a shepherd, on my native hills, the sounds of this pipe will call up the remembrance of England," he added, "and of Italy."

This playful allusion to pastoral life, was received by Arabella with a forced smile; she remarked the suspension of his voice towards the end of the sentence, and the addition intended as an escape from a particular application of his meaning. The situation of our two lovers,—for such they were, and were becoming known to each other as such,—was becoming more painful to them every hour that they passed together. Arabella's father had unsuspectingly dilated in praise of Bryan's manners and address in the several visits they had made that morning. Her brother did not conceal that his respect for Bryan increased according to the opportunities afforded to him of displaying the qualities of his mind and of asserting the independence of that mind on external circumstances. Even Lady Foxglove thought she evinced her own generosity by bearing testimony to his merit.

On the other hand, the reserve with which Bryan was treated by Arabella, was accompanied by so much of

gentleness and even of deference, that it was ill fitted to sustain his resolve to conquer a hopeless sentiment. He began to reason with himself, that even the memory of so much excellence would be the charm of his future life: and that the precious secret, known to himself alone, would elevate and purify his mind and exalt him, in his own consciousness, above the condition to which fortune had condemned him.

But, for the present, the secret was not known to himself alone; a mutual intelligence subsisted; difficult to be concealed from observers less blinded by prevention,—less secure in the distance at which Bryan stood beneath them. His vivacity, the regret of Arabella at the injustice of her seeming indifference, augmented the difficulty; yet the sense of duty, and its habitual empire over both, and their delicacy, mingling with an affection which they knew and which each was conscious that the other knew was, of necessity, to be renounced, enabled them to behave in a manner, faulty only because somewhat too guarded and ceremonious.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE Denham family met at breakfast half-an-hour later than usual; for it was Sunday,—a day, as much too long for those who are idle, as it is too short for those who labour in the preceding week. Charles inquired after Bryan.

"He told me last night," said Sir Cecil, "that he would be at Mr. Harrison's at his hour of rising, would pass the day with him, and return in the evening. I offered him a horse or horses, that is, a servant to bring his horse home again: he refused. I said they should be sent to Willoughby before dark: it is right for me to shew that I was privy to his Popish practices."

"Surely, he might walk," said his lady; "it is but ten miles to Grantham and back again."

"Madam, Mr. O'Meara is my guest, or my son's guest; and as such, ought to be treated with respect."

The lady rang the bell, and ordered the carriage to be ready to take her to the village church.

"Will you go to church, Bella?"

"I will stay and sit with Charles."

"Your father can do that."

"But I have a head-ache, mamma."

"Will you go, Sir Cecil?"

"You said I was to sit with Charles, my lady."

The lady became pettish, entered her carriage for a ten minutes' distance, and went off in very ill-humour.

"Bella," said Sir Cecil significantly, "a turn or two on the lawn will cure your head-ache: and we are so late and lazy, that there is already shade on the eastern side of the house."

"I will attend you, papa,"

"Hem!" cried Charles; "and is this your affectionate concern to relieve my solitude. Well, give me 'Marriage.'"

"I am glad you are so well inclined, Charles."

"I am very well inclined to go on with a very pleasant novel. I admire Lady Juliana, and her competence with the man of what she calls her *heart*, and her papa calls her *fiddlestick*."

"There are other characters in that novel," said Arabella; "but your malice prompts you to pick out the silliest of them as a specimen of what you call the fair sex."

"There are exceptions, Bella; you are one. I will hope to find another."

"This is a day for talking about religion, Bella," said her father to her, when they were alone: "what progress have you made in your reasoning on divinity?"

"Much depends on the will, my dear papa. I have endeavoured simply and sincerely to render my own will independent of all circumstances that may bias it either way."

"I do not see that there are any circumstances that can incline you to be a Catholic."

"The impressions made on my mind while we were in Italy are still vivid; but I distrust them, and ask myself, whether buildings, paintings, and the splendour of the cult, may not have excited a degree of enthusiasm."

"Well, you may come to your sober senses in this country: the Catholics have little or nothing of that kind here."

"Then I am disgusted by the ignorance and indifference of our own people: and this is unreasonable in me; for their religion may be true, though they neither know nor care any thing about it."

"Certainly, these considerations ought to have no weight on either side of the great question of truth or falsehood."

"I will prove to you, my dear father," Arabella said, "that I am reasonable, or, what is the same thing in your opinion, that I am not too much inclined to Popery."—

"In my opinion, one mode is as reasonable as another," interposed Sir Cecil.

"I know it; but I was going to say that even the argument from the antiquity and universality of the Catholic faith, does not seem to me conclusive; for an error is not less an error for being ancient or widely spread."

"You talk like a philosopher, Bella; I have some hopes of you."

"I hope I shall never be a philosopher, papa: a philosopher has so little worth living for."

"That is but too true, Bella; except to take care of his children, who will have as little worth living for as himself."

A pause ensued: they took one turn without speaking. Arabella resumed:—

"You have behaved so kindly to me in this matter, that I will ask your consent to reveal the state of my mind to Mr. Harrison; not merely to ask him questions, but to tell him fully of my doubts. He understands the points in dispute better even than Mr. Piron, as having been himself a convert."

"Why, girl, you have taken the first steps in this business, and now consult me about the second: but I will say, I should think it wrong to object to any proper means of setting your mind at rest. Yet, why do you consult all on one side? Why not consult the parson of our parish, or Dr. Fullarton?"

"I made an attempt to consult the parson," said Arabella, "and he told me he never talked divinity except in the pulpit. As to the Archdeacon, he seems to have adopted the maxim of Cardinal Bentivoglio, *infarinarsi in teologia ed approfondirsi in politica.*"

"Poor dear Bella," said the Baronet, "I see the papists will carry thee off after all! Thy father, when interrogated as to which is the true faith, moves the previous question; thy brother is still worse."

"It was settled," said Arabella, "that the matter should not be mentioned to Charles, till it could not be helped."

"True: so much for confidants: and thou canst find none but prejudiced, indifferent, or ill-informed, among those to whom thou hast a right to look for help. On your own side of the question,—for I see, notwithstanding your philosophy, to which side you incline,—have you spoken on the subject to Bryan?"

"Certainly not, papa: Mr. O'Meara refused to talk of it, even before he gave up his profession: and," she added, with a forced smile, "there is now no more claim on him than on any stray lay-Catholic one might meet with."

A pang went to her heart, as her strong reasons for avoiding all confidence in him suggested themselves to it.

"But my dear Bella, you seem to overlook all prudential considerations, as unworthy to be brought into competition with your sublime inquiries after the truth. You have never thought of the effect of your conversion on your future establishment in life."

"Why, dear papa, you must allow that if revelation be true, and if the Catholic Church be divinely appointed to teach it, all other considerations ought to give way."

"Humph! granting the premises, the conclusion follows of course."

"I shall afflict my mother, anger my brother, and displease you, my dear father. Notwithstanding all your kindness, you will not approve of that step, should I finally be convinced that I ought to take it. These consequences are sufficiently distressing without"—

"All vastly pretty: but pray now, supposing a suitor to present himself, while you are still undetermined; would you confide your doubts to him? Would you ask him if he would take you 'for better,' that is, Protestant,—'for worse,' that is, Catholic?"

Arabella well knew the purport of this question, though her father did not avow his special motive for it at this time.

"Assuredly," she therefore replied, "it would be in-

cumbent on me to reveal the state of my mind to one whose addresses were admitted."

"Then you would frighten him away."

"Then, papa, he would prove himself not worth retaining. But no one need be told of this point, till we are agreed on every other."

Sir Cecil forbore to explain himself, or to press his daughter further. His lady came home from church and reported that Mr. Russel would dine with them when he he had done duty in the afternoon at his other parish. That gentleman appeared accordingly, at the dinner-hour. At the dessert, Arabella determined to make him talk on controversy, if possible: she had been prompted to do so by her father, and saw reason, in the case supposed by him, for urgency in her polemical inquiries. The young rector of two parishes was a very gentlemanly young man; had lately married a woman of good family and moderate fortune; lived at Grantham, in the first society of the place; and from thence, served his two livings.

"Pray, Mr. Russel," said Arabella to him, "—now do not evade my question,—what do you think of the Catholic religion?"

"That it is a very convenient religion, Miss Foxglove."

"Convenient? How so?"

"You have only to pin your faith on another person's sleeve, and you are sure of being in the right."

"What person's?"

"The Pope's, of course."

"But the Pope is too far off."

"Then the priest will do as well."

"But how does the priest know the faith of the Pope?"

"I cannot tell," replied the rector; "but they do agree, and the poor Catholic is satisfied at all events."

When Saint Pambo, one of the fathers of the desert, heard it read from the bible, "*I will take heed unto my ways that I offend not with my tongue,*" he rose and said, "that is enough; I will go and meditate on that." So our heroine rose, and retired to her own room, where she penned the following note, addressed to "Henry Harrison, Esq."

"My dear sir, what do Protestants mean by asserting that Catholics 'pin their faith,' on the sleeve of the Pope

or of the priest? They seem to mean that the Pope or priest may impose any article of faith he pleases. If the question is a silly one, the fault is not mine, but theirs who give occasion to it. I ask, is this statement true? An answer will oblige A. F."

She gave the note to the groom who was to attend O'Meara home. It caused, as may well be imagined, some surprise to the party assembled at Mr. Harrison's, consisting of the two last-named, and the Abbé Piron. The latter immediately said, "I will answer the query;" and on the blank page of the same note, he indited the following to Mr. Harrison, who wrote down his words;— "Neither the Pope, nor any bishop or priest, nor any council, even though œcumenic, has power to propose to the faithful any new article of faith; but only to declare what has been the faith from the beginning." The note was signed, "Louis Piron, P.;" the witnesses, "Henry Harrison; Bryan O'Meara."

"You will know on your return, O'Meara," said Mr. Harrison, "what has driven Miss Foxglove to this hasty and rather whimsical appeal. I am glad the Abbé is here; and that you and I are in our proper places as attesting his answer."

"The document will, at least," observed Mr. Piron, "send the disputants, (for such, no doubt, there now are at Denham,) a good way back into antiquity, to find the sleeve in which to fix the pin."

"If I was not ashamed of punning," said Bryan, "I would express my fear that they will be sent on a sleeveless errand."

"Saving the pun, which I abjure," said Mr Harrison, "I agree in your fears, Bryan. They are afraid of being in the wrong; but are more afraid of being put in the right."

The Abbé was silent: he would not betray his confidence.

An hour before the arrival of Arabella's note, a discussion had taken place amongst the three persons just named, assembled at Willoughby, beginning by a reference, on the part of the Abbé, to a sentiment which had been asserted by Bryan two days before, "that the poor were, in the powers of the mind, superior to the rich." "Why should this be, Mr. O'Meara?"

"From the same cause, Sir, that makes them superior in the powers of the body,—more exercise." "How! do the poor exercise their minds more than the rich?"

"Yes, sir; with greater frequency,—with more continuity. I am a sort of amphibious animal in this respect, as partaking of the condition of the lower, and the education of the higher class; and have had more means of observation than any one belonging to the one or the other class only. The rich keep their inferiors at too great a distance to be at all able to judge of their moral or social qualities, hardly deigning to inquire if such qualities belong to them; whereas, in fact, the poor are habitually and constantly, by the necessities of their situation, compelled to that intercourse of mind with mind which renders them apt and ready judges of character in others, and induces that reflection and comparison and reference to principles, so useful in forming the character of the individual. The rich associate only with each other; their number is much smaller than that of the poor; and ceremony, or the observance of certain usages which none dare to neglect, is a continual barrier against intimacy: a poor man, on the contrary, meets his fellow,—the labours of the work-shop or of the field, are a bond of union: their acquaintance ripens into intimacy: they have nothing to hope or to fear from each other; and if there be compatibility of humour, a friendship is formed. This experiment is renewed and varied as often as new partners in toil are made known to one another; for the poor are not like the rich, confined to the limits of a neighbourhood including but few who can be admitted within its privileged pale, guarded by the indispensable requisite of a formal introduction."

"What does all this amount to," said Mr. Harrison, "but that the poor keep more company than the rich, and are more free in their behaviour?"

"Even this, sir, would be some advantage, in assuring to them that superior strength and acuteness of understanding which I claim for them. How often do we hear in high life, of such an one being very clever as having seen a great deal of the world, and of his having acquired, in consequence, great ease of manners. But the terms on

which the poor associate, are also favourable to the development of mind; there is among them no frivolity: for their concerns, however despised by those above them, are to themselves important; their amusements even, when they are permitted to enjoy any, are not embarrassed by petty intrigues for invitations, by jealousies about precedence, by envious distinctions in the display of wealth. Where all are poor, none can despise the other for being less rich than himself. How many bad passions thus live not, because they are not fed."

"But the passions are there," said Mr. Piron.

"True, sir: but the aliment is not. Instead of them, disinterested kindness, a ready perception of what is truly valuable in the character of others, and a desire to render themselves acceptable; not arising from vanity, pride, or ambition, but from the hope of that solace in the friendship and good-will of their fellows, which is almost the only luxury left to them. The rich cannot have friends; they associate with those who proclaim themselves their equals, by the same style of living, by the same expense of entertaining, by the same representation: but let any one among them suffer such a reduction of his fortune, as to be no longer able to give dinners,—to use the slang phrase,—he will no longer receive them, he will not be invited; or if invited, a shame of laying himself under an obligation, forbids the acceptance of that for which he can no longer, again, in the slang phrase, make a return. The intercourse of the rich depends on the mere accident of wealth: every rich man lives to the extent of his means, that he may prove himself deserving of consideration, proportioned ever to the wealth he may be supposed to possess; he has nothing to spare for a fallen friend, but pity expressed at a distance; or if carried to the ears of the sufferer of the novel disgrace of poverty, pity that bears with it, not the balm of compassion, but the corrosive of insult."

"But, if the rich will not, the poor cannot help their friends," said Mr. Harrison: "what advantage then have these latter?"

"The sympathy of a common lot," replied Bryan; "personal service, where that is useful or possible, as in

sickness; a kind feeling, that does not desert a friend, even in the jail, or at the foot of the gallows. Such is the social equality taught by poverty."

"I will take Bryan's side," said Mr. Piron,—"for he is evidently a partisan,—so far as to observe that, in my pastoral office, I have generally found the poor more liberal in giving alms in proportion to their means, than those who spare from their superfluity. The poor want only necessaries; a limited want, more easily calculated than the unlimited desires of the fancy."

"I am told," said O'Meara, "that in Ireland, towards the conclusion of the summer, what remains of the potatoes of the former year becomes almost a common stock among the poor; they desire to retain only so much as may suffice for their food till the new crop is ready: the surplus is at the service of their neighbours. It is in this spirit, that the poor are every where generous: they do not love riches, for they have them not; it is only they who have them that covet more and are avaricious of what they have; such is the lesson inculcated by wealth."

"You bring against the poor a heavy charge of selfishness, Bryan," remarked Mr. Harrison, "if you affirm them to care only for those of their own class."

"But it is not so," Bryan replied: "the poor *do* care for the rich; not indeed in the same sense as the rich care for each other, in so far as they are rich; but when they suffer those calamities that are common to our nature, they have the pity of the poor,—all that the poor can give, and sufficient to exempt them from the charge of selfishness. The poor will not indeed pity a rich man who loses half his fortune; they will say, 'he has still enough left to him;' but let him lose the whole, and be reduced to poverty; they will say, 'it is hard upon him, he is not used to it.' The poor compassionate the rich: envy, jealousy, discontent, may embitter the feelings of the poor; they may resent 'the proud man's contumely;' but they ever regard the rich as a portion of humanity, and make allowance for that 'deceitfulness of riches,' which prevents a reciprocal feeling."

"And yet these are they whom the rich despise," said the Abbé: "and it is by their contempt of the poor, that the rich will draw down on themselves the woe denounced

against them; and it is by the meek endurance of this contempt, not as the judgment of a weak fellow-mortal but as the will of divine wisdom, that the poor will confirm the blessing which that wisdom awards to them. Your mother understood this well."

Bryan was silent; the name of his mother always called up into his heart a feeling of respectful as well as of affectionate remembrance. The note arrived from Denham, and another topic was started.

Mr. Russel was not departed when Bryan returned to the Hall. He presented to Arabella the answer to her *query*. "It is not," he said, "from the person to whom your question was addressed, but from what he presumes you will regard as better authority."

"There," said Mr. Russel, "I told you they must always apply to the priest."

"It would be well, sir, if we could do so too," said Arabella. This rebuff a little confounded him; and he was not restored by hearing the contents of the document.

"I hope, sir," said O'Meara, "that now you know our faith to be not only unchanged, but unchangeable, you will take the trouble to know also of what it consists."

"Are you not aware, O'Meara," the Baronet exclaimed, "that it is very rude to talk to a clergyman about religion?"

He said this, however, with so equivocal an expression, that it was not very easy to determine whether he was supporting or blaming Bryan: the latter replied, "I was not aware of it, Sir Cecil; and I beg of Mr. Russel to believe that nothing could be further from my intention than to be guilty of any rudeness to him."

Mr. Russel, that he might not appear to be beaten off the field, staid a quarter of an hour longer; sustained in general converse by Lady Foxglove, who espoused his cause, and by Charles, who did not wish him to be mortified: and then took his leave, satisfied with the respect paid to him as a member of society, and leaving his professional character to its fate.

To avoid all renewal of theological discussion among the discordant elements of which the small party consisted, Arabella sat down to her piano, and played some pieces from Handel's oratorios.

Her mother did not object to sacred music on Sunday evening. O'Meara's clarionet was again introduced; he performed some well-known hymns, the Portuguese, and the Sicilian Mariner's.

CHAPTER XIX.

The following was the day fixed for the dinner of the match-making Mrs. Fullarton. Mr. and Mrs. Hawke and their daughter were already in the state of expectation, that is, beating about for conversation in the drawing-room, when the family from Denham arrived. The order expressed in Italian by the two words, *in tavola*, was now given; and the circle decorously waited its accomplishment.

Walton conducted himself with great deference to the parents of Arabella; to herself in a manner which he thought amiable; to Charles Foxglove and to Bryan with the same familiarity, but evidently distinguished that to one of them this behaviour was a matter of right, to the other a claim granted by indulgence. Charles and Clara accosted each other as old acquaintance; this was displeasing to Arabella, who wished to place their intimacy on another footing; and she endeavoured to forward this new relation by particular attention to Clara, which at the same time served as a manœuvre to embarrass the attentions of Walton.

Mrs. Hawke called Bryan to her, and said, "I owe you some amends for my rudeness when last we met; and if a very high place in my esteem can be any, you have acquired a right to it."

Bryan made suitable acknowledgment. "Now, then, for a *gage d'amitié*," continued Mrs. Hawke, "which I beg of you to accept on my account; it has no other value."

She produced two plain gold rings, with cornelian seals. "Look at the devices," she said, "and take your choice. You will say, I am always probing you."

Bryan inspected the engravings; on one were the

rose, thistle, and shamrock entwined; on the other, the harp of Ireland.

"They were made in Dublin," said Mrs. Hawke, "at the time of the Union, thirty years ago; and were then a test of party." She continued looking steadfastly and curiously at the workings of his countenance.

After a moment's hesitation, our hero answered, "If that is the case, madam, in utter despair that the meaning of this emblem will ever be accomplished,"—he supplied the remainder of the sentence by putting on the ring bearing the harp alone, and by returning the other ring of Union.

Dinner was announced; we must detail the order of the procession to the dining-room, to record an incident on which depends, in a great measure, the texture of our future story. The Archdeacon led forth Lady Foxglove. Mr. Walton drew near to offer his service to Arabella. "No, Mr. Walton," she said; "I really must not go before Mrs. Hawke; pray conduct her, and leave me to Mr. Hawke."

"My dear, you have a right to the precedency," said Mrs. Hawke.

"*A la bonne heure,*" said Arabella, "with a lady whom I never saw before, and may not wish to see again; but not with a friend like you, and the mother of my playfellow here." So saying, she inserted her arm into that of Clara, in such sort that Walton was compelled to take both or neither. As the former could not be done, he submitted with what grace he could to the latter, and offered his arm to Mrs. Hawke; she took it, saying at the same time, "I am sorry for your disappointment, Mr. Walton."

There was something malicious in this speech; yet Mrs. Hawke had taken especial care not to betray the surprise which this movement on the part of Arabella caused in her mind, by adding, "you are obliged to be content with an old woman." But Walton was vexed to the heart. He could hardly keep up the appearance of good manners when he saw Arabella inclining to the opposite side of the table, and seated next to Mr. Hawke, on the same side as her mother. Charles and Clara fol-

lowed; Clara was seated next to Mr. Walton; this was another *contre-temps* to Walton, although it had a good effect in so far as the progress of our story is concerned; for the neighbourhood of another young man excited Charles to attentions and an effort to please, which he would probably have neglected had Clara been dependent on himself alone, and without other resource. Clara too was relieved from the fear that her desire to please would be placed by Charles to his own account, and interpreted as an attempt to gain him in particular. She was, therefore, more than usually attractive; her beauty was animated by smiles, her manner was easy: and her converse even, playful and intellectual.

When the company was about to seat themselves at table, it was perceived there were but ten covers. O'Meara, who came last, was the person affected by this deficiency. Mrs. Fullarton did all that a good-natured and polite hostess could do on such an occasion; she reproved the butler, made most impressive excuses to O'Meara, and ordered a chair to be placed for him next to herself, at the end of the table, saying that he should assist her in doing the honours.

The incident caused some little confusion. Bryan, whom his situation in society had rendered umbrageous, suspected that it had been intended, and he was confirmed in his thought by the absence of all appearance of surprise in the Archdeacon. It required an act of interior recollection to enable him to forgive the pettiness of spirit that had designed the affront. Mrs. Hawke penetrated into what was passing in the mind of Bryan; and, to give him countenance, said, "I am certain there is no company of ten, who would not be glad of Mr. O'Meara as an eleventh."

Mr. Hawke cried out, "Mrs. Fullarton, I give you joy of your *cavalier*."

"*Servente*," added Walton. It was not clear in what sense he used the word; but Mr. Hawke restrained it to the meaning in which it might be applied to one in the rank of gentlemen by saying, "No; Mrs. Hawke has pre-engaged Mr. O'Meara in that quality; you all saw how she wedded him before dinner. Far from being

jealous, I think her choice does her credit." Bryan held up his hand so as to display the ring, making at the same time a bow to Mrs. Hawke.

There was a gracefulness thrown by Bryan into this action, which, together with the avowed patronage of Mr. and Mrs. Hawke, defeated Walton's purpose. But he was boiling with as much rage, as a man can feel or express in good company at a good dinner. Arabella had treated him in a way that he regarded as insulting; and though he would hardly own it to himself, he was jealous of Bryan, as the cause of her behaviour. "Mr. O'Meara," said he, "I think your name is the very name which George III. said he did not like, because there was a round O in it."

"The anecdote has been reported to me often," replied Bryan, "by good-natured friends; but I have heard also, that George III. had a better reason than he chose to allege, for disliking not the name, but the man who bore it. If this version be not true, I may say that to dislike a man on account of his name, and the name on account of the round O, was worthy of George III. and of those who think like him."

"If you mean to say, sir," retorted Walton, "that I think like George III. I take it as a compliment."

"You will take it, sir, in what light you please," replied Bryan quietly.

Soon after he resumed; "The king for whom we are all now in mourning———"

"For whom we all wear black," interrupted Mr. Hawke; while the Archdeacon and Walton were much annoyed by the correction.

"George IV.," said Bryan, "told his Scotch subjects that they were a nation of gentlemen. I do not dispute the propriety of the remark; there are many very ancient noble families in Scotland; and as their distant branches are to be found in every walk of humble life, the nation may be said to consist of gentlemen. The heads of the families subsist in splendour, and cast their rays on those who derive from them. But in Ireland, the heads of the ancient families are to be found bowed down in toil over the lands once possessed by their forefathers. Their labour, their tears and sweat, and not

unfrequently, their blood, fertilize the soil, their rightful inheritance in former times: thus the O's and the Mac's, and the real gentry of Ireland, are trampled under the feet of intruders and fiscal depredators."

This was rather a long speech to be uttered during dinner-time; but the company pardoned it on account of the provocation.

"Pray, Mr. O'Meara," said Mrs. Hawke, "do you allude, in any sort, to what may have befallen your own family?"

"I do, madam: my family was dispossessed by the forfeitures of the time of William III."

"Do you know where the property lies?" asked Mrs. Hawke.

"My father knew it, my grandfather knows it well. I shall see it ere long; for it lies not many miles from my native place, whither I am going."

"I would ask, Mr. O'Meara," said the Archdeacon, "believe me I ask with no unfriendly feeling; with what sentiments do you think you shall see it?"

"I trust, sir, with those of entire resignation to the will of divine providence." Then, that it might not be imputed to him that he gave the conversation too serious a turn, he added, "Aye, George IV. could find no gentlemen in Ireland: none like himself."

Walton perceived the impression made by Bryan on his hearers, and trembled for his own superiority; he rallied, however, and turned the conversation on the plan adopted by the Archdeacon, a new man and free to originate plans of his own, of dividing the two courses into four, by serving up the soup and fish before the solid food of the first course, and the pastry and sweets after that of the second.

"There are three advantages in this mode," said the Archdeacon: "you do not wait so long for dinner; you are better able to have it served up hot and hot; the dinner lasts the longer for its being served up at four different times, allowing an interval for wine. Sir Cecil, shall I have the honour?"

"Mr. Hawke, shall I have the pleasure?" said Bryan.

"Miss Foxglove, will you take wine?" said Mr. Walton.

When the ladies were retired, the Archdeacon, who was something of a *bon-vivant*, proposed a bumper to their health, and appointed Bryan his vice-president. He then said, "Mr. O'Meara, I regret as much as any man, the evils that have been inflicted on Ireland; but I hope, now emancipation is granted, that all will be well. I was always an advocate for emancipation, with conditions, with securities; the government of this country has thought fit to grant it without insisting on them; for that I am sorry; but not that it has been granted; as I hope it may be the means of making the Irish people quiet and contented."

"It is a mere word, sir; an act of imperfect justice extorted from the unwilling; not a pledge of future friendship."

"Nay, of what do you complain *now*?" asked Dr. Fullarton.

"Permit me, sir, to answer your question by another; for what object do you require securities?"

"For the Established Church, in Ireland, to be sure."

"Then the Orange party is still to domineer; the monster, Protestant ascendancy, is still to be gorged with the best blood of Ireland, and feed on its quivering limbs!"—

"Bryan, my good fellow, do not be poetical," exclaimed Charles.

"My terms may be figurative," said Bryan; "but facts, as you all well know, would bear me out in a literal and cruel application of them, to scenes that are not the work of mere imagination."

No answer was made to this remark. Charles prepared to turn the conversation to some other topic, and said, "Mr. Archdeacon, O'Meara cannot talk rationally on this subject."

"Pardon me, Charles," said Bryan, "I am cool enough for an arithmetical calculation. The proportion of Protestants to Catholics in Ireland is the same, or nearly so, as that of Catholics to Protestants in England; say half a million to seven or eight millions, and one million to fourteen millions. Would it be just that the Catholic religion should be dominant in England?" Dr. Fullarton did not like to say either yea or nay; and Bryan was

compelled to proceed. "Why do you want an Established Church in Ireland?"

The Archdeacon laughed: and desirous to turn the discussion into jest, replied, "Why, to tell you the truth, it is too good a thing to give up."

This frank avowal of political iniquity had the desired effect; even Bryan acquiesced, since the question was now settled on its right basis; and the good company talked on other matters: not however till after an observation from the Baronet, in which his son, Mr. Hawke, and O'Meara, concurred, that the only way to obtain peace was to have no religion dominant any where.

Mrs. Fullarton had been much mortified by the slight which Arabella had put upon Walton, by contriving to sit at a distance from him during dinner. Nothing prevented him from seating himself near her in the drawing-room; but he had not much reason to boast of the success of his suit. She behaved to him with a cheerful civility, from which no meaning but that of indifference could be extracted.

Clara relapsed into timidity, as soon as she saw Charles limping towards her. Bryan, on pretence of supporting his friend to a seat, placed himself near them; she then became as agreeable as before, and for the same reason: it was not a tête-à-tête with one whom every body but himself declared to be her admirer and intended spouse.

On the following morning, Mr. Walton set forth to assuage, in the only way that he knew of, the malice he had conceived against Bryan. He arrived at Denham early; that is, before mid-day; and was ushered into a room where he found Charles on his sofa, and the object of his visit amusing him by the lecture of the daily newspaper. After all due compliments to Charles, and a formal greeting to our hero, Walton entered on business.

"Mr. O'Meara," he said, "you announced yourself to the company yesterday, as descended from a gentleman's family. I am the less inclined to question your claim, as I am come to demand of you the satisfaction which, in that character, you cannot refuse me after the defiance you threw out. I mention the business before Mr. Fox-

glove, hoping that he will be our only witness; so that it may be concluded with the utmost privacy."

"I am perfectly willing," said Bryan, with provoking coolness, "that Mr. Foxglove should act as a mutual friend; but suppose wounds or death to follow, what becomes of the privacy?"

"We must take our chance for that, sir," said Walton.

"Mr. Walton," said Bryan, "do not misapprehend me; I only meant to point out a little defect in your plan. I now declare to you, that I will never fight a duel. I would not trouble you with any arguments, even if you were inclined to hear them; such is my resolve."

"Of that, sir, you will take the consequence; since it is of consequences that you seem afraid."

Bryan with most perfect self-possession, and in a determined and impressive manner, replied, "Mr. Walton, you have charged me with uttering a defiance; I now do defy you to say, upon your honour, that you believe me to be more afraid of wounds or death, to have less courage than youself."

Walton was struck by this appeal; and so far subdued, as to answer, "I make no comparisons, Mr. O'Meara: your courage and mine are of a different sort; yours is, I presume, of the sort that will meet the consequences of your refusal."

"Mr. Walton," said Bryan, "there is now one living at whose name the tyrants of England and the oppressors of Ireland tremble; one who announced himself in the legislature as the representative of seven millions of people; he has, though unhappily too late, resolved never more to fight a duel; and I know not of any evil consequences that can result to him, except, perhaps, that some coward may dare to insult him."

"Coward, sir?" exclaimed Walton, "and this from a man who refuses a challenge?"

"Be not hasty, Mr. Walton; I do not apply the term to you," said Bryan, calmly; "for at the time when you insulted me by taking the liberty of quoting a sorry jest on the name I bear, you did not know that I should not resent it, in the way in which you now resent what you are pleased to call my defiance, which you yourself then provoked."

Charles Foxglove here interposed; "Gentlemen," he said, "the affair is now arrived at the point, where it may be permitted to me to interfere: you have both of you agreed that I should act as a second; and if O'Meara had been a fighting man, I must, however unpleasant the business, have gone out with you on your shooting party. But hear me, Walton; I know O'Meara; he has well weighed the question of the lawfulness of duelling; nothing will make him swerve from his purpose."

Here Sir Cecil opened the door, and was entering the room, when Charles cried out, "Have the goodness to excuse us, father; we are talking on particular business." Sir Cecil exchanged a bow with Walton, and immediately withdrew.

"And now, Walton," Charles resumed, "what is to be done? You will not think of resorting to personal violence; it would be resisted, and—"

"Certainly," interrupted Bryan, "my principles do not forbid me to repel force by force."

"I will do Mr. O'Meara the justice to say," Walton interposed, "that towards a man accomplished as he is, it would be absurd; and I hope he will believe that I should think it unworthy of myself"

"I only mentioned it," said Charles, "as one of the modes in which men who have been baulked of their pious purpose of committing horrible murder, sometimes threaten to revenge themselves. As to the other mode, the publication of this affair in a light intended to be unfavourable to O'Meara, it would fail of its purpose. I, for one, declare, that although I should probably be fool enough to go out and meet my man, if called upon, yet I admire my friend Bryan's conduct; and I believe all would admire it on whose opinion he sets the least value. Duelling is almost exploded since the times of Sir Charles Grandison, that pink of courtesy and model of perfection, who fights a duel in every one of the seven volumes;—even the novelists of our day are ashamed of it."

Walton felt that he had involved himself in a difficulty, from which he now was desirous of extricating himself.

"Do you mean to say," he asked, "that I have acted like a fool in this affair? For if he who goes out to meet

his man is a fool, he who calls him out is in the same predicament."

"I was speaking," replied Charles, "on the folly of duelling generally; in the present case, I deem O'Meara to be the real challenger, as throwing down the gauntlet which you have taken up."

"Mr. Walton threw down one gauntlet," said Bryan, "and I threw down another; let him withdraw his, and I will withdraw mine."

"Do you make an apology, Mr. O'Meara?" asked Walton.

"No, sir; I am not to be ridiculed without an attempt to redress myself in the eyes of those who witness it. If you chose to give me an opportunity of putting you on a level, in point of understanding, with George III., it was your doing, not mine."

"I must interfere again," said Charles; "you two will never make any thing of the affair. Observe, Walton, that O'Meara's permission to you to take his words in what sense you pleased, though very murderous in form, was uttered with so much calmness that neither the ladies nor our elders were aware of its force. In truth, I was quite astonished at so much self-command in an Irishman, for I did not then know that O'Meara was not blood-thirsty."

"Because I am not a duellist," exclaimed Bryan, "am I to be affronted without making a retort?"

"Be patient now, at least," said Charles: "each of you has affronted the other; the first offence was clearly given by Mr. Walton."

A silence of some moments ensued. Walton at length resorted to the only means left to draw himself out of the affair. To continue his quarrel with Bryan would be worse than useless. Bryan would neither fight, nor apologise, nor suffer himself to be caned. To post him for a coward would only redound to his own discredit.

"I confess," said he, "that I was peevish: I was vexed by an occurrence that had just taken place, which, I dare say, you remarked."

Charles assented by a nod.

"With that," said he, "O'Meara had nothing to do, and you might, methinks, have slept it off."

Walton did not say that he had suffered a sleepless night and a feverish rising; that his pride had been wounded by having been thrown into the background by one whose condition he was so unjust as to despise; and that he was tortured also by jealous suspicions. He went on, replying, however, only to the first head of Charles's observation:—

"True: but when a man is angry, he vents his anger on the first occasion. I am sorry for having offended you, Mr. O'Meara;—I hope you will not refuse me an equivalent declaration."

"I cannot blame myself, Mr. Walton, for any thing I then said; but I am sorry there was occasion for it."

"With that you may be satisfied, Walton," said Charles; "it implies a regret that you were not then friends; be friends now." And the two shook hands.

"May I not pay my compliments to Sir Cecil and Lady Foxglove, and to your sister?" said Walton.

"My sprain is almost cured," replied Charles; "we will go into the drawing-room."

They found Arabella seated, at needle-work, with her mother.

"We have been talking over the occurrences of yesterday's party," said Walton; by way of accounting for the long parley.

Arabella took especial care that the visit should be considered as meant for her brother. Although she did not encourage Walton to be a suitor, this want of encouragement he would have found tolerable; but she did not discourage him; and from this, he could only infer that she cared not for him. This was intolerable.

Our heroine may be blamed for coquetry: but the truth must be told; her purpose was to allow Walton to proceed as far as a declaration in set form, if such should be his pleasure, before she would give him to understand her sentiments; and then to punish him for having, as she thought, from the beginning, made too sure of her.

Walton found his situation so unpleasant, that after a quarter of an hour, he pleaded business at Grantham, ordered his horses, and rode away.

CHAPTER XX.

THE following three days were passed by the family at Denham as time is usually passed by those who have nothing to do,—at least, nothing to do by compulsion; and the equal tenor of their existence would have been burdensome, but for the amusement derived from the preparations for the gala, which, in some degree, occupied all, but especially Lady Foxglove. She was fond of company: for besides that she had no resource in her own mind, she thought that, in company, she appeared to great advantage. Time had left her a fine person; a long and constant usage of society had given ease and confidence to manners always correct and polished; she was pleased with the show and bustle of great entertainments; conversation excited the torpor of her monotonous and undiscursive intellect; and, provided that the interlocutors testified their admiration of herself, and their concurrence with her prejudices, she was not very discriminative either as to the persons with whom, or the subjects on which, she conversed. She was, moreover, anxious, for the sake of her son and daughter, to maintain that distinction to which the display of wealth is, in an English country neighbourhood, an indispensable requisite. Hence, and from an especial view on Walton's alliance, arose the gala.

The day arrived. A long tent had been fixed on the lawn; on its table, was now placed a splendid collation. A large flag, displaying the armorial bearing of the family, floated on the tower; the sun shone brightly; the churchwardens, tenants of Sir Cecil, had, "without the least hint," set the parish bells a-ringing; and the poor of the village already flocked to their doors, and into the lane, to see the quality pass by.

Sir Cecil had given orders that, on the following day, a supper, that is to say, a late dinner, should be provided for a number of poor persons, equal to the number of those invited to the gala.

"At one-twentieth part of the expense," said he to Lady Foxglove, "I shall procure twenty times more of

gratitude, of good-will, and, it may be, of real useful help, from my poor neighbours, than your Ladyship will gain by *fête*-ing all your blockheads and coxcombs, male and female. I say nothing of the Bible being most decidedly in my favour."

The Archdeacon and his wife, with Mr. Walton, were the first who presented themselves, as the clock struck two; and the latter immediately engaged Arabella for the first quadrille. This was according to the true intent and meaning of the gala. Lady Foxglove and Mrs. Fullarton heard her consent with pleasure; but were much dissatisfied to observe her altered manner towards Walton: instead of indifference, she now put on a serious discontented air; as if meaning to shew him that she was only so far complaisant as she was compelled to be by circumstances.

Charles Foxglove had told his father, and Sir Cecil had told his lady, and the mother had told her daughter, of the challenge given by Walton to O'Meara. Mixed motives influence the minds of all: and we leave it to our readers to judge whether all the arguments against duelling would have arisen so promptly, as now, at the call of the reasoning powers of Arabella, had O'Meara challenged Walton. O'Meara's conduct had been fairly, and therefore favourably, represented to her; nor had the pride and peevishness of Walton been disguised from her by her mother, who thought such behaviour perfectly justifiable and in order, when a quarrel arose between a man like Mr. Walton and one so much his inferior, as O'Meara.

"In what respects his inferior, mamma?" asked Arabella: "not in mind, or manners, or principles."

"My dear Bella, do not talk, as if you knew nothing of the world," said her mother.

Mr. and Mrs. Hawke and their daughter arrived next. It seemed as if the several pretenders to matrimonial felicity were determined to be in good time. Clara was very becomingly attired in a fancy dress; and Charles, abjuring lameness, in a gallant speech, entreated her to afford a brilliant opportunity of proclaiming to all the world that his recovered strength was devoted to her service in the dance.

Mr. Harrison, who came in immediately after the

Hawkes, asked Bryan if he was ready to return to Willoughby with him that evening, according to previous arrangement. Bryan trembled with contending emotions, while he answered,—

"Oh, my dear sir, let me escape with you."

But we need not describe all the monotonous inanities of worshipful society.

"Qui pourrait tout dire sans un mortel ennui?"

A hundred persons had discussed the viands set before them; twenty more were, or would have been, had this been a real *dejeuné*, still *à jeune*. The ladies retired, and left ample space and food for them. Sir Cecil, who, as he privately told our hero, wished the fête, and all who partook of it, at the devil, had worked himself up into a most unsatisfactory state of high spirits, and cried out to them, as they left the tent, "Ladies, if you should hear a tremendous noise, as soon as you are in the drawing-room, do not be alarmed: it will be all in honour of your fair selves."

And, in effect, as soon as they had disappeared, he proposed a bumper to their health, with three times three. Bryan would have moralized; but he was very hungry, and sat down to dinner, with a Lord John Boyne, a younger son of the Irish Earl of Orangeton, with Walton and the rest of the hitherto excluded.

Sir Cecil soon perceived that the hubbub, and the champagne, and bottled porter would endanger the decorum of future proceedings. A private hint to the butler caused a long and loud echo of the bugle from the tower. The men left the tent, and going into the drawing-room, led forth the ladies to a fine glade, inclosed by lofty trees,—a sylvan retreat like those for which Hagley is so much admired. A target was at one end of this embosomed spot; at the other end, a heap of bows and arrows. The archers stept forth, and the archeresses also. The elders of the company stood and witnessed the graceful attitudes, the pretty by-play, and the varied success. Lord John Boyne took the lead in the contest: his arrow was fixed in the bull's-eye; and when all the young ladies had displayed their skill, or their want of it, and all the other young men had bent their bows in a vain attempt to be nearer than his lordship to the centre

of the target, Walton and Bryan remained, and it was plain that the strife between them was animated by some motive stronger than desire of the present victory. Walton shot his last arrow; it was below that of Lord John: he had, therefore, lost the prize. With this he would not have been displeased, but that it was still possible for O'Meara to gain it.

"Ireland against England!" cried Bryan, as he anxiously took his aim.

The exclamation was injudicious; but Bryan was agitated: it was, moreover, offensive to all who had never yet sympathized with Ireland; but his manly figure and fine countenance pleaded in his favour, and all were interested. His arrow shattered that of Walton, and entered immediately above it.

It was most fortunate for Arabella that the decision did not require of her to address herself to either of these two rivals. An almost superstitious interpretation of the event caused a tremor, which she concealed and subdued only by going to her mother to receive the prize, —a small silver arrow, which, with a gratulatory compliment, she presented to Lord John. His boyish and good-natured trifling gave her time to recover her presence of mind.

"Nay, now, Miss Foxglove," he said, "you must throw the chain over my shoulders."

She complied.

"There, now, I will wear it for your sake."

"For this evening, my lord,—no longer."

Lord John then went up to our hero.

"You are an Irishman, I may presume, sir?"

"I am, my lord."

"From what part of Ireland?"

"The neighbourhood of Athlone."

After some converse, Lord John, much pleased with our hero's manner, said,—

"I have several friends in county Roscommon, who would be very happy to shew you every attention. May I have the honour of giving you letters of introduction to them?"

"I beg leave, my lord, to decline your very polite offer, for the best of all good reasons,—lest your lordship

should, hereafter, repent of it. Your party and mine are so entirely different and opposed, that your lordship would be blamed by your friends for bringing amongst them one so utterly unworthy to associate with them."

"I cannot suppose that, sir," Lord John insisted.

"Indeed, my lord, it would be so. Your's is the high Orange party. I am, if it be not arrogant in me to give myself such a denomination, a Patriot."

"Well, sir, we may be friends here, I hope."

"Here and every where, my lord. You have treated me with confiding generosity: I have not abused your confidence."

When the probable motive of this refusal was afterwards known to Lord John, it redounded much to our hero's honour; and he obtained credit also for avoiding an explanation, which, under the actual circumstances, could not have but been troublesome.

Meantime, the bugle sounded again; and the party was called to the bank of the lake, where were assembled two sailing boats, and sundry smaller boats and canoes.

"Come, Orril," said Charles, "when you were at Eton, and I looked up to you as being three forms higher than me, you were a famous waterman on the Thames. Now for another prize."

Walton had formerly declared that he had managed a boat on the Lake of Geneva. So the match was agreed on. Lord Orril and Mr. Walton, with each a skilful helmsman, entered their boats: a flag, hoisted on a buoy at each end of the lake, marked out the course. The smaller craft was filled by those who were eager to "pursue the triumph and partake the gale." Bryan was so besieged by a Lady Caroline, with whose intrusive admiration of him we need not embarrass our history, that he could contrive no better way of being at a little distance from her, than by putting her into one of those cockle-shells with one seat for the rower, and another seat for his companion. Charles did the same with Clara; and Lord John with Lady Charlotte.

We are not sufficiently skilled in the appropriate language to describe the sailing-match technically: and a nautical pen like that of the author of "The King's Own," would be as indignant at being employed in the detail of a boat-race,

as Lord Anson was, when crossing the Humber in a storm, at the expectation of being drowned in a ditch. Suffice it to say, that the company declared it was a most charming sight, and that, whether from the superior sailing of his boat or from superior skill, Mr. Walton gained the prize.

It was a small silver anchor, which was intrusted to Arabella to bestow on the victor, as she had already done in the contest of archery. As Walton drew near to receive it from her, he exclaimed, "I trust Miss Foxglove will do me the same honour she did to Lord John Boyne, by placing the chain round my neck;" and then added, in a gallant tone, but without any sensibility, "let me be graced by wearing your chain and my emblem."

"No, sir," Arabella replied, as she handed the bauble to him; "no, it would not become me to adorn you with an emblem of hope, which is all your own."

Walton's first impulse was to jerk the anchor into the lake: he recovered himself, however,—thought it better not to make a scene,—made a low bow to Arabella, and put the chain of the anchor carelessly on his own shoulder.

He then began to ask some insignificant question, when the music, that had played "Rule Britannia," during the boat-race, without any intention of burlesquing the fresh-water sailors, gave place to the shriller notes of the bugle on the tower.

"It is to call us to the tent," said Arabella; and Walton offered his arm,—for they were now in the situation of relatives between whom subsists a family quarrel, obliged to keep up appearances that they might seem to the world as good friends. Arabella accepted his courtesy, thus naturally interpreted, and he led her to her place. A splendid dessert of fruits, with cakes, coffee, and tea, was here prepared for the good company; and an intimation given, that more solid food and more potent beverage were to be found in the dining-room.

But the music soon again struck up on the lawn, and the sets formed according to due order. Mr. Walton, having fulfilled the letter of his bond by dancing the first quadrille with Arabella, engaged Miss Welwyn for the second, and then found his occupation gone. He withdrew from the scene of the dance, went and talked *church-and-*

statery with the Lords Babicombe and Orril, railed in good set terms against atheists and radicals, and gratified his spleen by declaring a political creed opposed to that of the family of whose alliance he was disappointed, and of the Hawkes, ere long, as he perceived, to be united to it by the marriage of Charles and Clara.

In effect, Charles, under the pretext that his ancle pained him, had drawn Clara aside into the walk behind the shrubbery, and they did not return till the second quadrille was begun. What they had talked of in that interval was shrewdly guessed at from the altered manner of each to the other. Clara, alarmed by fancying that they were observed, retreated from him and took refuge with her mother, to whom she soon found an opportunity of revealing, in three words, the sum of what had passed. Secrecy is most easy in a large company; and Mrs. Hawke's apparent unconcern betrayed no secret. She led her daughter to Bryan and desired him to engage her for the next quadrille, adding, while she gently pressed his hand, "I believe you have been her very good friend."

During the time of the second dance, and by the help of a glass of *rather* cold water in the dining-room, Clara calmed her flurried spirits. Bryan, who had been vexed by what he could not but regard as the *advances* of Lady Caroline, was now pleased to have a partner who had no designs upon him; and Clara, who knew that he was in the confidence of Charles, was free from all embarrassment which she might have suffered with any one else. The prospect of an union, approved by her parents, with the heir of a family known and honoured in the country; relief from all uncertainty in regard to one on whom she would long ago have engaged her affections had he asked for them, lighted up her countenance with a chastened animation: and when Charles looked on her, conducted in the mazy dance by his friend, whom, without any disparagement of Lord John Boyne, the company called "the handsome Irishman," he could not help saying to himself, "Well, I do not think I have done a *very* foolish thing."

In the course of the evening Lord John accosted our hero.

"O'Meara! Oh, I beg pardon, I forgot that we were

not old acquaintances when I took the liberty of dropping the *Mr.*—But, tell me, have you ever met Lady Charlotte Baudoin before?"

"I have."

"At her own house?"

"Yes, at home."

"What do you think of her?"

"Your lordship does me too much honour."

"Nay, do not be formal; I had rather ask you than one of the neighbours, who might be prejudiced."

"I think her *very sprightly manners* are affected, because she hopes they may be very attractive, and that she is more reasonable than she appears to be. But your lordship must guarantee me against all evil consequences from this frankness."

"O'Meara, I am an honest man, though an Orangeman."

"In all that does not regard Orangeism, I cannot doubt it."

Lord John stared; but, recovering his easy manner, added, "But, to tell you a secret, I am a sort of fortune-hunter. Is there any ready money?"

"Lord Babicombe's ministerial interest is worth thousands. Perhaps Mr. Welwyn can tell what sort of account he keeps with his banker."

"He will not, or ought not;" said Lord John; "but I thank you, both for what you have told me and for what you have not told me. Be snug."

"Rely on my silence."

In truth, our hero felt so little interest in the matter that there needed no fear of his indiscretion.

Meantime the evening had set in, the chandeliers were lighted in the drawing-room, and the fiddles struck up a waltz.

"Do you permit waltzing, Sir Cecil?" said Lady Mary Oldham.

"*Honi soit qui mal y pense*, madam," replied the Baronet. "I think if there was one time less likely than another for me to fall in love, it would be while I was waltzing: but our young fellows who have not been on the Continent are rather awkward at it."

Lady Foxglove had made the same observation. She whispered Arabella, "You must waltz, my dear; other-

wise it will be thought we disapprove of others doing so. But I wish you would ask O'Meara to be your partner; we know he practised when abroad last winter, and waltzes very well—*considering*."

Why our hero should not be able to waltz as well as any other young man, Lady Foxglove had *considered: we* know not.

Arabella and Bryan had made a sort of tacit compact to avoid each other during the *fête*. She was engaged in discharging her duties as mistress of the ceremonies, and he had performed his office of high steward with a playful importance that was very amusing. But they were now brought together, and, at the head of half a dozen other couples, led off the waltz. When it was concluded, he led her to her seat and made a hurried bow. A quadrille followed: he danced with—he knew not whom. Arabella only knew that she was dancing with Lord Orril. Luckily, much presence of mind was not required to sustain an occasional conversation with his lordship.

Another waltz. The discarded suitor, Walton, for in that light he regarded himself, invited Arabella to be his partner; he made an extraordinary effort of self-command for an especial purpose. Arabella could not refuse without offence: she submitted, for she knew that his suit was terminated. When the first pause offered an opportunity, he said, "Miss Foxglove, I shall weigh anchor," significantly touching the bauble that hung before him; "I shall weigh anchor and set sail to-morrow."

"Mr. Walton," Arabella replied, "I very sincerely wish you a good and successful voyage."

After this waltz, in which Bryan was compelled to support the swimming, languishing, fainting, dying Lady Caroline, he was relieved from further trouble by Mr. Harrison. "Bryan," he said, "your visit here being at an end, you may depart when you please, like any other guest invited to the fête."

"My dear sir, let it be immediately," replied Bryan; and they took leave. In due time the rest of the company did the same, and, as was announced in "a particular account of the splendid fête at Denham" in the country paper, all arrived safe at their homes before Sunday morning.

CHAPTER XXI.

When Bryan was in the carriage with Mr. Harrison, he was manifestly under so strong an agitation of mind that the curiosity as well as the sympathy of his friend was excited.

"What is the matter with you, Bryan?" said Mr. Harrison, "and why did you talk of *escape?*"

"Oh, sir, spare me; spare me till to-morrow; let me try to compose myself."

"Whatever may be the cause of your trouble, dear Bryan, call religion to your aid."

"Religion! that blessed word," Bryan cried, "I have not heard it these ten days—that day only excepted which I spent with you—but in the scoffs of Sir Cecil and Charles, and the ignorant pretensions of Lady Foxglove."

"But you bore it, not the name only, but the substance, in your heart?"

"I trust that its influence will, ere long, restore my tranquillity, and enable me to submit, as I ought, to the Divine dispensations."

"I will ask no questions, Bryan; if you want my counsel, command it," said Mr. Harrison; and they said no more; they did not even comment on the scene they had just quitted; it was not to the taste of either. They arrived at Willoughby. "Here, for four years, I was happy," said Bryan. "I was always happy with you, sir."

"You shall be so again, Bryan; I am sure you can have done nothing to forfeit the blessing of heaven, and that is happiness."

When they met the next morning, the expression of Bryan's countenance was calm, and even melancholy.

"I have been enabled, sir," he said to Mr. Harrison, "by one night's reflection, to return to my former resolve; a cause of grief to me, but not of perturbation."

He was unwilling to say more at the moment, and his friend forbore to press him. At breakfast he was absorbed in deep thought, and every now and then looked

timidly at Mr. Harrison, who at length said to him, "Come, Bryan, relieve your mind of its burthen; at least, let me share it with you."

"My kind, my revered friend, I never had a secret that I did not reveal to you; but how shall I now tell you of my folly?" Then, he added with a powerful effort, "best tell it in the fewest words—I love Arabella Foxglove."

Surprise, regret, anger, but corrected by pity, were the emotions of Mr. Harrison. "Folly, in very deed, Bryan," he said; "but is your love returned?"

"How shall I answer your question, sir; how explain myself? I believe Arabella has a very favourable opinion of me,—that she bears to me an affection which would not refuse to declare itself, were our situation in life more equal."

"Whence do you infer this, Bryan; have you made known to her the state of your own heart?"

"Never, sir, in words."

"Come, it is better than I feared," said Mr. Harrison: "this is some relief to me."

"You shock and alarm me, sir. Have I then been so very much in the wrong?"

"In the wrong, indeed; you ought to have *escaped,* to use your own word, from the very first moment."

"We both of us, sir, from the instant that we perceived that our affections were in danger of being misplaced—so, I fear, I must term it, for I have already received your sentence of condemnation—we behaved with the utmost reserve to each other."

"Arabella is a girl of good sense, and of more experience than you, Bryan; though but one year older, she has seen a great deal more of the world, and understands better than you what her situation in society requires of her; she will not degrade herself; she will not dishonour her family."

"Dishonour!" exclaimed Bryan, in an offended, but, at the same time, piteous and fearful tone.

"I must," replied Mr. Harrison, "incur the risk of displeasing and distressing you, Bryan, to save you from —I repeat the word—dishonouring yourself. As far as you yourself, your own qualities and endowments are concerned, any woman might glory in avowing an

attachment of the heart to such a young man as you are; but admitted, as you have been, under the same roof with her, in the entire confidence that no such thought as that of allying yourself with the family would ever enter your mind, such an attempt would be regarded as traitorous and dishonourable."

"But if she favoured the attempt, sir?"

"Then she would draw upon herself the imputation of most discreditable weakness and folly, as having forfeited her station in life and disgraced her family."

"My family," replied Bryan, "was once as high as that of Denham."

"A dream, foolish boy," said Mr. Harrison, taking Bryan affectionately by the hand; "an illusion which seven generations have witnessed to be nothing but empty air. It is for your own good, dear Bryan, that I talk to you thus severely. You must submit to your present state and all its consequences." Bryan grasped the offered hand convulsively.

After a painful pause of some length, Mr. Harrison resumed, "I may hope that I have, in some degree, brought you to your senses. Let me interest myself for Arabella. What reason have you to suppose that she would connect her fate with yours? You are no coxcomb, Bryan, and I can rely on your statement how far she may have encouraged you to hope."

"I can distinguish, sir, between encouragement and its contrary; and one great cause of my vexation last night was the behaviour of Lady Caroline Baudoin."

"If Arabella had behaved as that silly girl did," said Mr. Harrison, "you would respect the one no more than the other."

Bryan was struck by the observation, "That may be true, sir," he said; "but Miss Foxglove's bearing towards me, though kind and friendly, is distant and dignified. Of her sentiments, you must be well aware that I am a competent judge: her timidity, her eyes cast down when they met mine—fool that I am to talk in this way—but you require it of me; her blushing"—"A dreadful symptom," interrupted Mr. Harrison, smiling faintly.—"But her judgment," Bryan went on to say, "her opinion on this matter, is, I fully believe, the same as your own, and

she would regard a declaration of my sentiments as presumptuous and extravagant, and treat it accordingly."

"You shew your good sense, Bryan, by this interpretation of Arabella's state of mind: endeavour to equal her in prudence and discretion: you have, both of you, brought a most troublesome inmate into your souls; but time and absence, and the absolute renunciation of all hopes and thoughts that ought never to have been entertained".....

"Such, sir," said Bryan, "I am persuaded is her resolve, and such shall be mine. I will not incur your blame; I will not forfeit your good opinion. Bitter as the counsel is which you have given to me, I thank you for it, and will follow it."

He covered his face with his hands, as overwhelmed with grief. "It is not merely for the confirmation of all that I had anticipated, but for the very harsh words you have used; you, my best, almost my only friend; certainly the only friend whom I could have consulted on this subject."

"Dearest Bryan," said Mr. Harrison, "I have applied no harsh words to you, but to the project only; it was necessary to explain to you in what light it would be viewed by others. If you are to give up all thought of it, would it have been wise, or even kind, in me to palliate the evil that it would bring on you both? Your share of censure would be the larger, since you would be considered as its author; but even Arabella's share would not be light for her to endure; she would forfeit more than you, since her situation has the advantage of yours; if she should repent, there is an end of happiness."

Bryan continued silent. It is not very easy for an old man to talk patiently with a young lover; it is not very easy for a young lover to talk reasonably with an old man.

The parties to the dialogue here reported arrived at a conclusion hardly to be hoped for in such a case—they became good friends, as before.

As they walked into Grantham to attend their chapel, they passed by a range of low houses inhabited by persons of the working class. Bryan grasped the arm of Mr. Harrison, and in an under tone, but emphatically, said, "Aye, there's the rub!" Mr. Harrison was pleased with

this symptom of returning equanimity, and allowed the reflections of Bryan's mind on his former humble state to take their salutary course, without remark on his part.

After mass, they went into Mr. Piron's house, and sat with him while he breakfasted. The converse of this venerable ecclesiastic, now in his seventieth year, Bryan's first friend and preceptor, had a healing influence on his mind, and assisted him in regaining a temper of tranquil resignation.

They talked of the gala of the preceding day. "Alas!" said the Abbé, "what a profusion of expense, wasted on those who do not want it, save for the purpose of dissipating their *ennui.*"

"It puts money into circulation," replied Mr. Harrison, "and animates industry."

"Though an old man," said Mr. Piron, "I so far agree with modern reasoners on this subject as to admit that it is by these means the poor obtain their share, or at least a *portion convénable* of the produce of the soil, which would not be cultivated but for the purpose of commanding their labour: so far, these amusements are useful as modes of dispensing the superfluous wealth of the rich. I admit, too, that they may be innocent; but I would pray the rich to impart to the poor the necessaries of life, before they assemble to enjoy its luxuries. They might work the great wheel of circulation by providing these necessaries; for the artisan employed in weaving a blanket for the bed of him who wants a defence against the winter's cold, would receive his wages as well as he who toils to prepare the 'purple and fine linen' of the rich. I would ask, but that you will think one sermon enough for one day"—his auditors begged of him to proceed—"I would ask, then, whether Sir Cecil Foxglove will remember with greater satisfaction, at the hour of death, the extravagant festival of yesterday or the frugal meal he will give his poor neighbours this evening?"

"Concerning that, there can be no doubt," said Mr. Harrison; "but I do doubt whether the particular mode of benevolence adopted by Sir Cecil for this evening be judicious. I fear that by giving food to the poor, it is made dearer to those to whom it is not given."

"In a time of absolute scarcity," said the Abbé,

"and when the supply of food cannot be increased by increasing the demand, your observation holds good: and even in seasons of ordinary plenty there is an objection to this mode; the poor man, invited to the feast, devours more than he would eat at his own cost; both because, unhappily, it is unusual for him to be well fed, and under the mistaken notion of laying in strength for the morrow."

"But it makes him happy," said Bryan, "at the time, and before and after the time: a good dinner is an epoch in the poor man's life."

"That argument ought by no means to be undervalued, my dear young friend," said Mr. Piron; "the force of it is felt by Mr. Harrison, as I perceive by his look. Yet it is not an English argument."

"But I am an Irishman," said Bryan.

"I know it, young man," replied Mr. Piron, smiling; "you have told me so a hundred times. Let me then be excused for the remark, as there is but one Englishman present, and to him the remark is not applicable, that an austere disregard of the moral feelings of the poor is a part of your English national character: you wish the poor to be sober, industrious, orderly; but you care not whether they love you or hate you; whether they are contented or grumbling; cheerful or gloomy: you provide them no little alleviations of their state; nothing that diverts or amuses them; nay, you will not permit them to amuse themselves on the only day of the week on which they have leisure: and the consequence of the tyranny exercised over them in this last respect is, that more sin is committed on every Sunday than on all the days of the week put together."

The two laymen knew that the speaker had peculiar means of information; that a sin is considered as aggravated, in some degree, by being committed on a day ordained to be kept holy, and that such aggravation would be revealed to him by his penitents. This authority was conclusive as to the fact.

"To conclude," said Mr. Harrison, "for we must take our leave, and, as you have called your discourse a second sermon, let us end with a 'to conclude;' the best gifts to the poor are of things that last the longest; clothes, furniture, or such things as make their homes

more comfortable; fuel, the want of which makes their homes miserable: and, I will add, from my own defective experience,"—the epithet was disowned by his hearers—"tools and implements of labour. Their tools are very often imperfect—to them a very harassing and discouraging circumstance. I once set up a poor man for life by giving him a spade, a rake, a hoe, and a wheelbarrow: he offered himself to work in the little gardens attached to the best houses in Grantham, where there was nothing nearer to a spade than the kitchen fire-shovel, and nothing more like a rake than a small-toothed comb; they were glad to employ the man for the sake of his tools; and by the time these were worn out, he was in funds to supply himself with others. You remember him, O'Meara; he often went to your mother's."

We will now look in upon our friends at Denham. As soon as the company had retired on the preceding evening, and the family had taken refuge from the disorder of the rest of the house in Sir Cecil's own room, Lady Foxglove inquired of her daughter, "What am I to understand, Miss Foxglove, from this extraordinary step on the part of Mr. Walton?"

We should have no pleasure in detailing the scene that followed. The meekness and firmness of Arabella's explanation had no effect in appeasing her mother's wrath or soothing her disappointment. In vain did her husband remonstrate that they had no right to dispose of their daughter against her will, so long as she did not dispose of herself against the will of her parents. Lady Foxglove was not to be appeased. "The fête was all thrown away!" she urged, as an aggravation of a still greater disappointment.

On this, Charles took occasion to remark that he hoped it would be the date of his own happy engagement to Clara Hawke.

"You have then proposed?" said the mother, greatly soothed: "you are my comfort, Charles; you can take up with the daughter of a country gentleman; as for your sister, I suppose she means to be a duchess at least."

"Am I not your comfort too, mamma?" said Arabella, hurt by her mother's unkindness.

"Yes, Arabella; and you will be my comfort long enough at this rate."

On this, Arabella retired; and, with her father's approbation, wrote a note to Mrs. Craig, a widowed cousin, a Catholic, living at Grantham, and requested her to receive her on a visit for a few days.

The family was too much fatigued on the following morning to go to the parish church. Lady Foxglove breakfasted in her own apartment, and did not meet her daughter till dinner-time, half an hour earlier than usual, that they might attend the supper which Sir Cecil had provided for the poor. Hardly could Lady Foxglove be persuaded to accompany them, till Charles said, "I have appointed to call on Mr. Hawke this evening; I will drive you to the village, mother, in my curricle, and Bella will walk with my father"

Thus, two and two, they came to the Foxglove Arms.

Sir Cecil and his daughter went first into the large room of the inn; on each side was a long table, and on each side of the two tables sat about five-and twenty persons, partaking of a coarse but plenteous meal. As Sir Cecil entered they began to rise from their seats.

"If you do not sit still you will drive us away," he cried out; and was obeyed. Lady Foxglove entered, leaning on the arm of Charles.

"How hot the room is," she exclaimed.

"Not hotter than a full drawing-room," Sir Cecil whispered; adding, "pray *look* pleased, whatever you may be in reality, or they will not thank you for coming."

He then, leading his daughter, her face dressed in smiles prompted by a kind heart, proceeded slowly up one side of the room. Almost all his guests were known to him; and for all he had a question or a jest, or at least a look and gracious nod. "He is a good-natured gentleman," said they. Of one man he asked, "Where is your wife, Thomas?"

"Where should she be, your honour? sitting beside me."

"What! at dinner time, in a large company? That is not the fashion."

"May be, fashionable folk do not love their wives as well as poor folks."

Sir Cecil was a little conscience-stricken, but being on his good behaviour, he replied, "Why when you have been out at work all day, you know your wives are glad to see you back again at night."

"There may be somewhat in *that* your honour."

The party from the Hall had now performed more than half of their courteous circuit, and were returning by the side of the other table, when Mr. Harrison and Bryan entered and went up the room, on the same side, to meet them. As they advanced slowly, that they might not pass by any without notice who might happen to be known to either of them, Bryan was arrested by a poor Irishman,—

"Sure," he said, "I have seen your honour these last two Sundays at chapel; and I would have made bold to speak with you as you came out, but that you were with the quality. I am an Irishman; but I need not say that, for my tongue will tell it without my saying a word."

"A *bull*, Pat, a bull," cried a man from across the narrow table.

"It is no bull," said Bryan: "he meant without his saying a word to declare himself an Irishman. Well, my countryman, I would have found you out, Patrick, but I have only just now heard of your being settled here."

The Irishman's heart was gained by this speech. "I am in England these five years," he said, "and have a wife and two babies." Then, gazing at Bryan, "What a fine handsome young gentleman you are; and they tell me that your own father was a labouring man, like myself!"

"For shame, Patrick," cried his wife; "how can you mention that to the gentleman?"

"Why not?" said Bryan. "Are you ashamed of your husband?"

"No, Sir."

"Then, why should I be ashamed of my father?"

"I chose my husband for myself, sir."

"And God chose my father for me," said Bryan. The woman was silent.

Another woman, seated next to her, began however: "God bless him for a good son; I have seen him standing over his father's grave and leaning his hand on the tombstone for ever so long a time, very early in the morning."

"Then he was praying for his father's soul," observed Patrick, in explanation of the act.

"No, Patrick," said Bryan, "I trust my father's soul has long been in bliss; but I was praying to him to pray for me to the merciful Father of us both."

This short speech made a powerful impression on all who were within hearing of it. "There is comfort in this," said the wife of Patrick. Then she added, to Bryan, "Sir, my husband has been trying to make me a Catholic ever since we were married. I will go to Father Piron, as soon as ever I can, and know more about it."

"Do so, my good woman," said Bryan; "you cannot do better."

Bryan went and joined the party of the Hall, now increased by the accession of Mr. Henry Russel, to whom the baronet said, "You should have been in time to say grace, reverend sir; you were amongst the foremost, yesterday, in the sports and the dance."

"You would not have me dine with these good people, Sir Cecil?"

"Certainly not, Mr. Russel," said Lady Foxglove.

As they passed near where Patrick was seated, a subdued murmur of applause, and even some clapping of hands, was heard. Lady Foxglove looked round, as if inquiring its meaning. "It is for that good young gentleman, my Lady," said an elderly woman, rising from her seat and curtseying. "We all love him that have heard him talk."

Lady Foxglove continued her stately progress.

Bryan was compelled to explain to the company, while taking tea at the Hall, the meaning of this demonstration. He related simply what had passed. "I did not think I had said any thing extraordinary," he observed; "but it seems it was so to them."

Mr. Russel made not the least remark. The other hearers were affected by the relation according to the habitudes of the mind of each. On that of Arabella it made a deep impression.

But Lady Foxglove's wrath on occasion of her daughter's refusal of "so good a match," as she thought it, had continued unabated all the morning; and it was in no

wise soothed by the sight of the happy faces at the dinner; for she had never approved of Sir Cecil's "absurd attempts to gain popularity among people who had no votes;" so she had called his benevolence, without being aware that she had produced an argument for universal suffrage, that last horror of the Tories. Her mortification had even been reinforced by the flattering reception that Bryan had met with, which had seemed to throw even the benefactors themselves into the shade; and, lastly, she was vexed by the incapacity of Mr. Russel, which left to Bryan the undisputed right and credit of praying to or for his own father, without any endeavour to prove the "fondness" and the folly of such a practice.

In short, she was so evidently, and to such a degree, under the dominion of anger, that Arabella thought it prudent to defer till the next morning the communication she had to make of her purposed visit to her cousin.

On the following morning, therefore, she said, "As I have been so unhappy as to offend you, mamma, it were better that I should be absent for a few days;" and she gave her mother the note she had received in answer from Mrs. Craig.

Lady Foxglove read it. "As you please, Bella; you are your own mistress: you have taken more important steps than this without consulting me."

"My dear mother, how could I have consulted you before giving an answer to Mr. Walton?"

"You gave him no opportunity of asking a question."

"Had I done so, mamma, my answer would have been to the same effect. I wished to spare his pride the mortification of a refusal."

"And to gratify your own."

"I wished to shew my sense of his presumption and security."

Here the Baronet interposed. "There will be no end of this," he exclaimed; "it may last till the duke comes, who, as your ladyship says, is to replace Walton. Arabella has explained herself on the motives of her refusal; and if your ladyship is of opinion that incompatibility of humour is no bar to matrimonial happiness, we may look at home."

Among other misapprehensions of Lady Foxglove, one was that she herself was a very dutiful wife; though she had never studied to conform her own mind or taste to that of her lord. On occasions like that of the present reproach from her husband, she always affected extraordinary meekness. "Arabella might have yielded her own humour," she said.

"After the example of her mother, I presume," retorted the Baronet.

Charles saw that the flame was spreading, and hastened to extinguish it. "My dear father," he said, "you are entering on another interminable subject. I regret as much as my mother, Bella's refusal of Walton; it would have been a very good connection. But do not let her be tormented any more about it. Will you go with me, sir, to Mr. Hawke this morning? He will expect you, as he told me."

"Yes, willingly," said Sir Cecil.

"Then my mother can have the barouche and take Bella to Grantham."

"Not I, indeed," said Lady Foxglove, "your sister can go alone: there will be the coachman and footman to attend her."

"Then I will go to Grantham with my sister; and my father can ride or be driven to Wroughton by the groom."

"You have not called on your cousin since her return," oberved Sir Cecil to his lady.

"I shall write and excuse myself on the score of the fatigue of the fête; from which, thanks to your daughter, I am not yet recovered."

Arabella suppressed the pang which the epithet *your* gave to her heart; and Sir Cecil asked, "Do you mean to tell all the world that you have quarrelled with your daughter?"

This argument prevailed; and Lady Foxglove was seen, two hours after, taking, as was judged by all who saw them, a pleasant airing with her daughter.

Lady Foxglove cordially greeted her cousin, made anxious inquiries, and after a decent stay of not less than half an hour, took an affectionate leave, as well of her cousin as of her daughter, going through the ceremonial, with the latter, of the parting kiss. She loved her daugh-

ter, but in her own way. Arabella loved her mother, but could not help wishing her temper and prejudices less violent.

All the efforts that Arabella had hitherto made to confirm herself in the belief of the religion by law established, had as yet turned out to its discredit in her judgment. She determined to make her stay with Mrs. Craig available to the opportunity of consulting the Abbé Piron. She did so; and we will not here detail those arguments, which are familiar to the mind of every Catholic, but which would repel him who is heedless of the truth. He who seeks the truth will know where to find it more fully detailed than it could possibly be in a work of fiction and entertainment.

"An invitation from Mrs. Craig, Bryan," said Mr. Harrison to our hero, a few days afterwards, "to dine with her on Saturday;—the last Saturday, she observes, on which abstinence is to be kept by us, as the Bishop's mandate for abolishing it is to be read, in chapel, on the day following. Mr. Piron is to meet us; and you will then have an opportunity of taking leave of him, and of Arabella; since you are to set off on the evening of Sunday."

Bryan felt a faintness come over him while he gave his assent. In the course of that morning, he rode over to Denham, to take his leave of all of that family who were there to be found.

"I am sorry we are to lose you," said the Baronet; "but I hope Ireland will give us credit for what we have made of you."

"I shall ever be sensible of all the obligations I have received in this country, from the time I came to it, a helpless infant, to that of my return such as now I am."

Charles was not sorry for the departure of O'Meara: jealousy of his merit, or, at least, an apprehension that his own was obscured by that of Bryan, had insinuated itself into the mind of Charles; for Bryan was the more prompt and prominent, and, therefore, the more brilliant personage of the two. In impelling forward Charles's engagement with Clara, Bryan had exerted an influence, which, while he yielded to it, he resented.

"You will return, Bryan?" said he.

"Not till the summer of next year. Adieu, adieu."

The farewell of Lady Foxglove was perfectly correct and measured.

The evening party at Mrs Craig's was a gloomy one; every body, except that lady herself, was depressed in spirits. Soon after dinner, Mr. Piron was called away. Mrs Craig and Arabella retired, not into the drawing-room, but to take some turns in the garden. Mr. Harrison and Bryan joined them soon after. The walk was not broad enough for four; and Mr. Harrison walked by the side of the elder lady. Bryan contrived that Arabella and himself should be at a sufficient distance behind them.

"Might I," he said in trembling tones, "might I but take this last, this only opportunity of telling, not my hopes,—I have none; not my wishes, even,—for I dare not entertain any—but the sentiments"—

"Tell nothing, Mr. O'Meara,—all is told; and, as yet, you have not forfeited the friendship, nor incurred the blame, of my family; you have not compromised yourself,—I will add, nor me. I think it honourable to myself that I can value your merit."

"This is much," said he, "but is this all? I must obey you; but must we part thus?"

"We must, Mr. O'Meara; be assured of my most sincere concern for your happiness; of my true respect; and, if you will accept of it, my friendship."

He pressed her hand in great agitation: to reply was not allowed, as a turn of the walk brought them within view of those who observed them.

The next day, to the surprise and delight of Bryan, Arabella was present at mass; but she retired without any conference with him. He took an affectionate leave of the afflicted Abbé, who saluted him after the manner of his country.

It had been arranged that Mr. Harrison should accompany Bryan as far as the point of the road at which the public carriages to Holyhead were to be met with. Bryan was delighted at this prolongation of his intercourse with the friend of his youth. When they were seated, and Bryan had taken the reins,—

"My dear, my excellent friend," he said, "I will see

you again next summer. I have taken a kind leave of all my old acquaintances. I hope they will not forget me."

"We will all remember you, my dear Bryan: we have all of us prayed for you this morning."

This was said significantly; and as Bryan drove out of the town, he ventured to ask his friend,—

"Can it be possible that she, too, assisted at mass with that intention?"

"Why not?" said Mr. Harrison. "The very impossibility of your union may have induced her to give you this pledge of her good will."

Bryan gave an account of their last conference: he remarked particularly on the emphatical manner with which she had pronounced the words, "you have not yet compromised yourself, *nor me*."

"The two last words are most important, Bryan," said Mr. Harrison; "they justify you from any charge of presumption; and are most creditable to herself; she owns a preference; she is clear-sighted, candid, but resolved."

"It is in this sense I have understood them, sir," said Bryan. "They fix the seal on my destiny; they close up my heart against hope; but they fill it with as much content as any thing that is not hope can impart."

"You have passed sentence of single life on yourselves, both of you," said his friend; "for so highly do I deem of you both, that I do not think that either of you will find an equal to the present object of his or her preference; and it is probable that neither of you will be contented with an object of inferior merit. I am inclined to believe that she rejected Walton, because the comparison between yourself and him was forced upon her by your presence at the time of his addresses."

"All of Walton's class," said Bryan, "are not like him in character; and she will be solicited; and the poor Irish peasant will be forgotten, or at least, quietly resigned. Well; be it so, if she can be happy. As far as regards me, however, my kind and sympathizing friend, —for such you are, at least, on this point as on every other,—as far as I am concerned, you are a true prophet. I can never marry another."

"Your education has disqualified you, my dear Bryan, for finding a mate in your own rank of life; such a wife as would suit a farmer, will not suit you; and one who would suit you, would not condescend to be the wife of a farmer."

"The remembrance of Arabella will, of itself," said Bryan, "decide my celibacy; so that my choice of agriculture as a profession, or instead of a profession, is not chargeable with bringing on me this evil;—if an evil it really is."

"*If!*" said Mr. Harrison. "You put in that doubt, Bryan, out of civility to me I suppose."

"Well, sir; and if I did, it would better become me than the suggestion of such a doubt in my own person."

"I was peculiarly circumstanced in my youth, Bryan," said Mr. Harrison; "on becoming a convert, I found the Catholic gentry by no means disposed to compensate to me the loss of former friendships; and excepting a few steady intimates, who were indifferent to theological questions and unbiassed by interest, I found myself deserted by those whom I had quitted, but I was not received by those whom I had joined; so that though I am as well born, and better educated than them, there is not one of these Catholic gentry into whose country-house I have entrance, not one whom I could appoint as guardian to my children were I to leave an infant family: and this, after thirty years' profession of their faith, and some service rendered to their cause! Such is the conduct of men who are prodigal of civil attentions to those who will never give them credit for liberality till they renounce their faith entirely, or shew an indifference to it equivalent to renunciation."

"You astonish me, sir," said Bryan; "is this possible?"

"It would astonish even a Protestant, Bryan; and he would deem it incredible. But these people have been oppressed, and depressed, and compressed together, till they are become incapable of sympathy for any who are not of their old coterie and connection; and they are, as to their knowledge of the state of society, a century behind the rest of the world. I make allowances for them. Alone, as I am, their neglect is of little import to me.

Were I a father of a family, my charity would be put to a more severe trial. Let us change the topic; it is not an agreeable one."

"Present my kindest respects to your mother," said Mr. Harrison to his young friend at parting: "to your poor father, you owe your moderate independence; to her you owe those dispositions which recommended you to us, who have endeavoured to fill the place of that lost father. I need not tell you to be grateful to that Providence which, in so extraordinary a manner, has cared for the fatherless."

CHAPTER XXII.

Writers of romances often apologize for the shock which they inflict upon their readers' feelings when the course of their narrative compels them to pass over a certain lapse of years without comment—to declare that, in the turning of a page, the story, like that of Guy Mannering, has advanced five, ten, or fifteen years. We are going to do the very reverse of this:—and without apology. This being an Irish tale, we deem that we may, without violating any proprieties, request the reader to imagine that he has receded—has gone back some forty or fifty years. For this unusual leap—more wonderful than any that was ever made by Turpin's celebrated mare, Black Bess—we will not at present give any reason. This professes to be an Irish novel. Some Hibernian bull has, the reader may imagine, tossed it over his head and left it behind on the high road to Athlone, at the latter part of the last century; and at the commencement of one of those rebellions which form the accompaniment to all Irish events, for, as Tom Moore says, to all Irish harp and tunes:—

> "So oft have they echoed the deep tone of sadness,
> That e'er in their mirth it will break from them still."

On Friday, two hours before sunset, Bryan O'Meara descended from the coach near one of the two principal inns at Athlone. A tall, stout man, between forty and

fifty years of age, in appearance like one of those labourers from Ireland of whom he had seen so many, after carefully reviewing all the passengers, came up to him and asked, in a hoarse voice, and with an unceremonious manner, but with an appearance of strong feeling,

"Are you Bryan O'Meara?"

"I am."

"I have been waiting here to take you to your mother."

"Thank you." Then, after giving a *bonne main* to the coachman, Bryan added, "I have no luggage but this carpet-bag: can you carry it?"

The countryman took up the bag without saying a word. Bryan threw upon it his great-coat, at the same time adding an umbrella to the load. On this, the man said, somewhat sarcastically, as Bryan thought,

"May be you will be wanting that for a walking-cane. Follow me."

Bryan followed his uncourteous conductor along the road by which he had entered Athlone. Soon after they were clear of the town, the man stepped over a stile on the left hand, saying,

"We will save half a mile by going across the fields."

"How far is it?" asked Bryan.

"Less than a quarter of an hour's walk."

They went along the field-path, and over another stile into a second pasture. Here the man turned round, and, letting fall his burthen, approached our hero, and, gently laying a hand on either shoulder, gazed at him intently. There was so great a degree of kindness in the man's looks, that Bryan, though surprised by the familiarity of the action, could not resent it as an affront. At length the countryman said,

"You do not know me, Bryan. I am Hugh Moylan. You are like your mother." The tears rose to his eyes, but did not overflow. "Sit down here on the green turf," said he, "and let me tell my story, for I see you do not know it: neither was it fitting that you should know it till now that you are of an age to judge how far above all common worth is the mother whom you now are going to behold. When last I saw you, Bryan, twenty-one years ago, wanting a few days, I was sorely afflicted: I had you on my knee, and my tears flowed faster than

now, for I was a younger man. I might have been to you in the place of the father whom you had lost; your mother might have been to me the happiness of my life, but for her reverence for the memory of Albert and her love for you. She would take no second husband."

He then related the particulars of the scene recorded by us to have taken place between himself and the widowed mother of Bryan: he related it faithfully and feelingly: it was impressed indelibly on his memory and his heart.

Bryan listened in fixed and mute attention. When his mother's solemn declaration, "I am as much the wife of Albert as if he were still living," and the question, "Could I bear to share with any other my love for that dear son of Albert?" when these were reported, he was astonished by the simplicity and sublimity united in her expressions and conduct. He exclaimed, when Moylan had concluded,

"All is consistent and in unison in her: she is governed by superhuman motives in the great concerns, as well as the daily actions of life. I could not suppose that her situation had ever admitted of extraordinary sacrifices; but I am sure she is capable of making them. What can I do too much for such a parent!"

They rose from their seat; for Bryan was impatient to see her on whose character such fresh lustre had now been shed; when, from that necessary admixture of high feeling and petty affairs by which we are humbled even in the exercise of our virtues, a contest arose between them who should carry the carpet-bag. Bryan insisted on taking it. Moylan persisted.

"What!" he said, "because you cannot give a little bit of silver to your would-be—would-have-been father-in-law, will I let you tire yourself? I am more used to burthens than you are *as yet*. This is nothing to a sack of wheat!" Then, that the conversation might resume an equable tenour, he asked, "What is this hard, square thing at the top?"

"My clarionet," said Bryan; and this led to a talk on the piper and the Sunday dances of the village or hamlet to which they were going. They mounted in an oblique direction the range of hills that forms the left bank of the

valley of the Shannon ; and, having passed through several fields arrived at the brow of the acclivity.

"This is the last stile we will have to clamber over," said Moylan. "This is Lea Dale."

They stood on a natural terrace, over the edge of which, at about half way from either side of the valley, fell a stream that seemed to have scooped out the dale from between the high lands to the north and south. It fell, not indeed as a perpendicular cascade, but with a precipitous rush of its waters, which, having gained the lower level, flowed in a rapid course, to win their way to the mighty river at the distance of half a mile from the rock on which our gazers stood. They viewed, for the valley opened to the westward, the lakes into which the Shannon is expanded above Athlone ; the well-wooded hills of Roscommon, and a rich spread of luxuriant fields on either bank. The glorious sun was now darting his almost horizontal rays into the dale. On what did he look down? On ten wretched cabins, inhabited, as it would seem, by the refuse of mankind. Yet, in these cabins were hearts that beat high with every impulse that does honour to our nature; cheered in the toils of life by mutual sympathy, by the charms of domestic affections, and, above all, by the hope of retribution in a better world.

"There is your village," said Moylan, pointing to the thatched roofs, scattered at unequal distances on the opposite slope : "there is your mother's cabin ; and there she comes, running to meet you."

They also hastened, and on the bridge that crossed the stream before it rolled over the ledge of the rock, the mother embraced her son,—the joy and only hope of the widow:—and the son poured forth the words of filial love, and of more than filial reverence.

"After six years, my dearest Bryan, at length I see you again," said the happy parent, as she leaned on Bryan, and redirected her almost fainting steps towards her humble dwelling.

"Hugh, my dear cousin, this is kindly done of you."

"Joy to your heart is joy to mine, dear Bridget," said Moylan, as he left them at the door of the cabin.

They entered: a female peasant, about forty years of age, rose and met them.

"Your nephew, Teresa: Bryan, my excellent and beloved sister," said his mother. The aunt embraced him tenderly, and, looking at him for a little time with much complacency, said,

"You are welcome, most heartily welcome. I have often thought of you, and prayed for you, and rejoice to see you. My father is laid down on his bed to rest himself; but he is not asleep: let us go and take you to him."

At the same moment a voice called to them. Bryan stepped into the room.

"My dear Albert!" an old man exclaimed.

"I have no father," cried Bryan, kneeling at the side of the bed; "bless me, my father's father!"

The old man laid his left hand on the head of Bryan, and with his right making the sign of the cross, said, fervently,

"May the Almighty bless the son of my lost Albert and of a daughter dear and kind to me as my own."

When the excited feelings of all had somewhat subsided, his mother said to Bryan,

"In this room you were born, my son."

A sort of confusion took hold of the faculties of Bryan's mind. For ten years, he had been conversant with the exterior and circumstances of another class of society,—had been regarded as one belonging to that class. The firmness with which he ever endured any reference to his low birth and condition, had not proceeded from insensibility, nor yet from humility, but was grounded on reasoning that had proved to him the injustice of the opinions of men on this subject, and on a conviction of the insignificance and worthlessness of human advantages, in reference to the high destiny of an immortal being, fallen as man is fallen, restored as man is restored. These thoughts had sustained him while his real condition was at a distance. It now, however, pressed upon his senses in a form that would have appalled a soul less informed with Christian faith and the true motives of magnanimity.

"Father," said Teresa, "will you not come off from your bed, and have tea? It is past five o'clock."

Lawrence (that was the old man's name) assented, saying to Bryan,

"Grandson, your mother has taught us all to like tea, since her return from England: we country folk thought it too grand for us; but it seems they all drink it there: it suits women and old people like me, past hard work."

They adjourned into what ought to be called the sitting-room of the cabin.

"Shut the door," said Lawrence; "there will be air enough from the chimney."

Bryan looked in that last-named direction. The view of the roof within was not impeded by any ceiling: from a hole in the thatch immediately over the fire-place, and fastened to the gable-end within, hung a tunnel of wicker-work, as low downward as was consistent with its safety from the flames. His grandfather, in answer to his look of inquiry, said,

"The smoke finds its way very well, when there is not too much wind."

"And the rain, grandfather?"

"Oh, it does not put out the fire, unless when it comes directly down upon it."

"But it drives in at the hole?"

"Then we sit on one side."

Bryan took his seat on one of the four wooden chairs, which, with an easy wicker chair for the old man, two stools, two tables, a dresser and some shelves, composed the furniture of the clay-floored cabin. His mother, whether suspecting his feelings from his countenance, or judging from the state of the case what they must be, said to him,

"All this is strange to you now, my son."

"It is strange to me, mother," he replied. "I may as well own it; for I fear you suspect by my looks that I think it so. But do me justice; God forbid that all this, or worse, much worse, should influence at all my sense of duty or affection to my nearest and dearest friends: make allowance for the force of habit. A man may, by the help of divine grace, resolve to do a good or virtuous deed, or refuse to do what is contrary to virtue; and such a purpose may depend on one act of the mind and will:

but Thomas à Kempis says, '*Custom is conquered by custom :*' I add, *by custom alone.*"

His grandfather but partially understood this dialogue, and cried out,

"O, I have no fear but we will make you an honest Irishman like your father, in a little time, when you are used to us."

Bridget went into the other little bed-place at the back of the cabin, and brought out a packet of letters. "Here they are, my dear Bryan," she exclaimed, "all the twenty-four letters that I have received from you, one every quarter of a year, for the six years we have been parted; and here is the dear letter the gossoon brought me this morning, to say you were coming. It is the crown of all the rest," said she, smiling, and laying it on the bundle. Then untying the packet, and opening the uppermost letter, she added, "this is your last from college. You say that, as you have given up the ecclesiastical state,"—and she shook her head mournfully—but continued, "you beg us not to reproach you for that —you will go into ——shire and find out what your friends, particularly Sir Cecil, will do for you; and that, if your expectations fail, you have a good heart, and two good arms, and will return here to the state of your father."

"I did not say *estate*, mother," said Bryan, good-humouredly, not wishing the conversation to be too serious.

"No," cried Lawrence: "we have had no estate since the time of my father's grandfather. Much good may it do them that have it."

Bryan then answered the question implied by his mother.

"I say it in family confidence. I would not have the amount of what has been given to me to be known to any but ourselves, for reasons that my mother is well aware of; but only that means have been furnished for putting me in a way of life. From Mr. Harrison I had no right to expect any thing: he has maintained me for these last ten years, and paid for my college education. Sir Cecil has given me two thousand pounds."

The sensation of surprise and joy caused by such an annunciation in such a company, cannot well be repre-

sented. The first movement, however, was one of self-renunciation.

"It is all for your own use, my dear boy," cried Lawrence. "I will never touch a farthing of it. Your mother leaves me nothing to want, and I will not be a burthen to you, old and poor as I am."

"Nor I, my dear nephew," said Teresa, "unless I should outlive both your mother and my father, and be as old as he is."

Bryan interpreted all this as it was meant; not as an interposition of a claim of right, but as a presumption of his generous intentions, and a refusal to profit by them.

"Well," he exclaimed, "but what is to be done with me and my money? I have had consultations with my friends, particularly with Mr. Harrison, and we have come to the conclusion that nothing will suit me but agriculture: I must turn farmer."

"You must serve an apprenticeship to that trade, my boy," cried Lawrence.

"I have heard," said Bryan, "of young men who have placed themselves in a farmer's family as a sort of pupils in agriculture, paying a sum as a pension for board and instruction."

"That may do very well," replied the old man, "for a youth who lives with a clergyman or tutor, to learn Greek and Latin: but how would you learn farming in that way?"

"By observing what is done upon a farm," said Bryan.

"But your pupil in Greek and Latin," rejoined his grandfather, "does not learn by observing others at work; he works himself; otherwise he would learn but very little." The old man seemed to himself to have made an ingenious parallel, and self-flattery prompted self-applause. "You thought me in my dotage," he continued, "when I called you by the name of my son, at first seeing you; but I did it because you were to me as Albert. Now, then, listen to me, grandson. With your money, you may either buy a small farm or rent a large one. A small farmer always labours hard himself."

Teresa saw the drift of her father's argument, and disapproved of it, as having conceived a strong desire, on the revelation of her nephew's wealth, that he should be,

what she saw he was so well qualified to be—namely, a gentleman, and she here interposed.

"Nay, father," she said, "if he buys a small farm, he will have to pay no rent."

"He will have to make it answer to his profit," said Lawrence; "and the wages of a labourer is a good part of the profit of a small farm: if he does not work, he will not be able to pay his own rent to himself; and it will end in his finding a tenant and living on the rent of his land."

"Then I might as well live on my dividend," said Bryan; "it would be a poor pittance for an idle man, and I do not want to be idle."

Bridget here said to her son,

"Our great neighbour, farmer Tobin, is so good as to give you lodging for a few nights: you can consult with him on this business. He is one of the most skilful farmers in all the county Westmeath. He learned his skill in Scotland and in the county of Norfolk: he went over on purpose."

"The best thing you can do," said Lawrence, "is to offer to live with him and work for him. You need not ask for wages: you can afford to do without them."

Teresa, still holding to her own view of the subject, asked,

"Why should not Bryan live with him as a pupil, as he calls it, and board with the family, paying a sum yearly; that is for a year or two, or as long as may be needful?"

"Mother, what do you think of it?" asked Bryan.

His mother replied,

"I would wish you, any how, to be at Mr. Tobin's, it is so near to us, and we should see you every day: and Hugh Moylan lives with him and manages for him, though they call him the ploughman; and your cousin, Mark Bryan, is there as the carter."

"It would be quite absurd," said our hero, "to pretend to be an idle gentleman there, and to be too grand to sit at table with my own cousin german."

"I think so, too," said Bridget; "and I do not object to your engaging for hard work; young and strong as you are, it would not hurt your health. Moreover, voluntary poverty, the catechism tells us, is a counsel of

the gospel; and voluntary servitude may have its merit also. You may give to the poor what you save by paying no pension, if Mr. Tobin agrees to take your labour for your board and instruction."

"Two to one against you, aunt," cried Bryan, with a jocund air.

"True, nephew; but you have not given your own vote, yet."

"Well, suppose I vote with you, which I am very much inclined to do, out of pride and laziness, then the votes will be equal. But here comes one to give the casting-vote," he said, as our friend John Conolly entered.

He was attended by two tall young men, one about five-and-twenty, and the other about twenty years of age. Most hearty and joyous greetings took place between him and our hero.

"I have not seen you since you were a little boy, my dear Bryan," said Conolly; "and time has done wonders for you. No, not wonders, neither; for you were a most promising child, and are only what you promised to be. Bridget, you may well be proud of your son. And let me be proud too," he added; "here are my too great boys, as fine young men as yours, though I say it, and though they cannot pretend to all the learning and polish that he has. Here, measure heights. Paul, Walter, measure your heights with Bryan."

The two young men were evidently abashed by their father's familiarity with one of our hero's appearance; but re-assured by their consciousness of a common lot with his, they complied with what was required of them, without awkward constraint. It was found that Paul, who was six feet high, was an inch and half, and Walter a full inch taller than Bryan.

"If you had been brought up at home, now Bryan, you three would have measured heights often, and been good play-fellows," said Conolly.

This recollection gave confidence to the two brothers; and, seated on the two stools, while their father took the remaining chair, they conversed at ease with Bryan, as far as John Conolly's frequent questions allowed them opportunity. He ran over the names, and inquired the

present circumstances of all with whom he had been acquainted in his former journeys; and Bridget was thus informed of the changes which the last six years had produced.

At length, she desired Paul and Walter to take her son to walk on the terrace, and shew him the dale, for that she wanted to talk with their father. The three young men rose accordingly, and went into the wide green lane, formed by the fences of the several gardens of the cabins, and the high hedge which, set with lofty elms, separated the dale on the north from the farm of Lea Hall. This lane terminated at a gate opening on the turnpike-road. Between that road and the dale, to the east of the dale, was Lea Farm, of about forty acres, occupied, as Walter told our hero, by a man named Bellamy, who also rented all that part of the dale not cultivated as the gardens or potato-fields of the cabins. The dale was about thirty acres in extent, and nearly half of it, on the northern side of the brook, was thus set apart for the use of the peasants—including a patch of land of three or four acres, on which they grew flax, that supplied them with their linen.

The sun was just descending below the hills of Connaught. They arrived at the bridge, which was one huge monumental slab, brought from the cemetery of a ruined convent, at two miles' distance, and laid across the brook. The almost defaced letters and armorial bearings were still visible on this desecrated stone; and here stood our hero, listening to the murmurs of the waters, and the talk of his two companions. He was now returned to that dear Ireland, which his heart had so long yearned to see, and to the place of his birth—his native home; but he brought with him a refined mind, and cultivated talents, and social habitudes—but ill according with all that here belonged to him. The agitation of his spirits disturbed, but did not destroy, the interest he took in the scene before him. "This is my true and real destiny," he said to himself, "the past is but an illusion; but it will spread its charms over my humble life; will raise me in my own consciousness, and give me the means of useful and charitable influence." One regret occurred to him—a strong effort dismissed it for the time. "Now I

know who and what I am," he thought; "her kindness made me forget myself: but, here, on this spot, to indulge a hope of an union with Arabella, were to be mad indeed. This is my real, my sole grief; the rest is indifferent.—Let us go along the side of the slope," said he, after a moment's reflection, "as far as the corner, where it turns to the left, and gives you a view of Athlone." They did so, and looked down on the barracks and fortifications on the other side of the Shannon, with a feeling that passed, like an electric shock, from one to the other of them. The spirited steed champs the bit, overleaps the bar--such were the imaginings of the three young patriots.

John Conolly, from the opposite side of the dale, now beckoned to his sons, and, with Bridget, met them at the gate of the field of the dale.

"I will call at eight o'clock," said John to our hero, "and take you to Mr. Tobin's;—they go to bed at nine, and you will want to have some talk with him."

His sons departed with him, and Bryan walked on the terrace with his mother.

"I made up my own mind," said Bryan, "from the moment that you, my dear mother, expressed your wishes on this matter, not to insist on any thing which should prevent me from staying near you. Did I not return to Ireland for the purpose of visiting you? I will live with Tobin, at all events; that is if he will give me leave. But what says John Conolly?"

"He says," replied Bridget, "that in any farmer's house whatever, you would be so much above the family, that none of them would properly be companions for you, and that the first or second table would make very little difference."

"Pretty much my own view of the case," answered Bryan, "but I feared it would appear like pride to say so; but I can have no objection to his having said it for me."

"He says a great deal more," continued Bridget; "and I was surprised that he could judge so well; he declares that you are a thorough-bred gentleman; your manners are so easy and quiet at the same time; not blustering nor bustling, like some he has seen, but well balanced—that was his own word."

Bryan recollected to have heard that Arabella had once expressed the same opinion; "But let that pass," said he to himself.

"Mr. Tobin has a daughter about twenty years old," said Bridget; and not observing that her son was in a fit of deep musing, she went on: "and when he knows of your money, he may not object. This is your aunt's fancy; and your grandfather says, that your being a servant instead of a pupil in his family, will be no hindrance."

Bryan was roused by the plain drift of this harangue, and cried out—"I hope my grandfather and aunt will not teaze me on this subject."

"You are peevish, my son," said Bridget; "where would be the harm if——"

"And you too, mother! I know the difference between predial and menial servants, and that the former are not debased, as the latter are, in the opinion of the class of society to which they belong; and that whether as a little landowner or a great renter, I may aspire to Miss Tobin; but let me hear no more of her, an' ye love me." They returned to the cabin.

Here Bryan said, "Grandfather, I fear you are in the right; all the circumstances of the case come in aid of your advice. Aunt, you must put off, for some time to come, your wish to see me a gentleman. If two thousand pounds can make the difference of my being one or not, I shall never be one as long as I live. Mother! I will adopt your suggestion, and endeavour to follow the example you have set me by making all your life one act of penance and of piety. If humility be a Christian virtue, incumbent on the rich as well as the poor, it is independent of riches or poverty. It is for our sins, our spiritual defects, our pride, vanity, and self-love, that we ought to humble ourselves, not on account of our temporal condition, for this does not degrade us in the sight of our Maker; even if it be as low as that to which I was born, and to which I hope to have the grace to submit my will."

The tone in which this was uttered admitted of no reply, but acquiescence.

He continued with them in tranquil converse, and par-

took of their evening meal; and on Conolly's reappearance, according to appointment, took an affectionate leave of them for the night.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Our hero and his ancient friend, after crossing two fields, saw the gable end of Lea Hall before them, in the third. They passed in front of it. As well as could be distinguished in the darkness of the evening, it had been built about two hundred years: it was two stories in height; four large windows with stone mullions below, and an equal number above, with a high-pointed roof of thatch; a door in the centre, studded with nails, and set in a wrought frame of stone: such was the exterior of the house,—a family mansion, of a moderate size, now become the dwelling of the farmer who rented the greater part of the estate that surrounded it. They went on to the farm-yard,—for the central door was to be opened only on great occasions, as Conolly observed, and knocked at a door in the other gable-end of the edifice. It was Rosa, the daughter of Conolly, who now received them,—a girl of eight-and-twenty, who had lived nine years in the service of the farmer's family. She made them pass through the kitchen, into a room still called the hall, though diminished in extent by a partition, taking off a passage from the front door to the principal staircase, and used as the common sitting-room.

Mrs. Tobin, from her arm-chair, near the chimney-corner, greeted our hero with,—

"You are welcome back to your own country, young man:" then to Rosa she said, "Tell the master that he is come." And while Rosa went to execute this command, she turned her head slowly, with an attempt to conceal the surprise evidently occasioned by our hero's personal appearance, towards the other side of the room, where Hugh Moylan and Mark Ryan were seated, saying to the latter,—

"Why do not you come and speak to your cousin?"

Mark, an arch, sprightly lad, of seventeen, stood up, and having first said,—

"Why, mistress, he frightens me: he is such a fine gentleman," came creeping, as if really afraid, towards Bryan; and, when near him, said, "But as he is my father's sister's son, I suppose I may venture to shake hands with him."

"You are a fine, saucy fellow, Mark," said Bryan, taking hold of the offered hand: "I must call on my uncle, to-morrow. How many brothers and sisters have you?"

"There are seven of us."

"And are you the eldest?"

"To be sure I am!"

Rosa returned, saying to Bryan,—

"Please to step this way, Sir."

As he crossed the passage between the hall and the parlour, he met a smartly dressed, and very young woman, to whom he made his bow, in passing. Tobin rose from his chair, when Bryan entered: then, recollecting himself, lest the action should be interpreted as a mark of respect to the cotter's son, did not sit down again, but took some steps in advance.

"I am glad to see you," he said; "but I did not expect to see one of your appearance: and I fear my lodging will not be good enough for you."

"I was told, Sir," said Bryan, "you are so kind as to let me sleep in my cousin's room: what is good enough for him, I ought to think good enough for me."

"That may be,—but you have not been used to such a bed lately, I may suppose."

"We had very hard beds in college," said Bryan, smiling.

Tobin, now resuming his own seat, said,—

"Take a chair, young man."

When this was done, he proceeded, after taking a few whiffs at the pipe he was smoking:—

"I know your story: it is not a very uncommon thing for young men, brought up as you have been, to refuse, at last, to take holy orders, and then they return home as you have done."

"I did not think myself good enough for that state:

and, besides, I foresee, from the way in which England treats us, that we shall soon come to blows;—and if so, I would wish to be free to help my country, like a true Irishman."

Tobin's eyes flashed fire; he made no reply, but pointing to a corner cupboard, said,—

"Reach yourself a glass."

Bryan complied, that he might not impede the course of Tobin's favourable sentiments, and drank the whisky poured out for him. A look was interchanged, but not a word uttered.

"And now," said Tobin, "as I know your family, I may ask, what do you mean to do with yourself?"

This was all in order, and as might have been expected; yet Bryan was surprised that so ready an occasion was offered of making his purpose and request known to Tobin. This latter had been too much used to farmers' bargains not to demur; and though he really had intended to take an additional farming man, as a shepherd, yet he instantly perceived the credit that would redound to him, in the neighbourhood, from having a young man of our hero's appearance and prospects domesticated with him as a pupil, and made, in some sort, dependent upon him for his first establishment in life. Having, with ready and calculating foresight, determined what would be most to his own advantage, he thus combated the half-formed resolution, which Bryan was delighted to abandon.

"A labourer?" he said. "No! you will be above being ordered by Hugh Moylan. I do not pretend to keep a bailiff, but he is my head man: and your manners and language would not suit here. As to your grandfather's assertion, that a man must work in order to be able to judge of another's labour, it is all nonsense. Do you think that I hold the plough myself? Farmers soon find out how much work a labourer ought to do in a day: their own interest teaches them that. They are more likely to require too much, than to be satisfied with too little. Besides, old Laurence is a bad judge of these matters. Every one knows that he is the rightful owner of all this country; and he never forgets it himself, with all his resignation! His father thought about the matter

even more than he does, and gave him strange notions. And now you are come back fitted to take your own again, the people must look up to you. You must be my pupil. Help yourself again, and drink to better times."

The bargain was thus concluded.

"Another favour I ask of you," said Bryan, "is that you will not mention to any one the means there are for my establishment on a farm,—it would throw an awkwardness in my intercourse with those with whom I shall have to associate, if they knew me to be what they would call a rich man."

Tobin was pleased with this sign, that our hero did not mean to take upon himself the airs of independence. "I will keep your secret," said he; "it will be time enough for it to be known when you find a farm that will suit you. But you must talk in plainer language; and if you can learn to speak the brogue, so much the better."

Conolly knew that it was time for him to depart; and by way of informing Tobin that it was so, entered the room, and asked—"Then I will not be wanted any more, Sir?"

"No, John; good night."

Bryan followed Conolly to the door by which they had come into the house, and stopping him at the little porch, and taking out his pocket-book while speaking, to save time, he said, "I desire you will not tell your wife or sons, or any one, that Sir Cecil gives me any thing. Here is a bank note for ten pounds; give it to your son Paul: I know he is going to be married. You may say that Sir Cecil sent it to you by me."

It would be difficult to describe the extravagance of Conolly's gratitude, or of his manner of shewing it. He seized our hero round the neck with both hands, and kissed his forehead—"O, my dear Bryan," he cried, "I always said you would be a good man: why, this will set them up; it will buy them a cow. My cow cost me two journeys to England; and it was worth while, for it has kept us from want ever since; and they will come into one so easy! all along of you! We will all pray for you."

"Well, do not make so much noise, my dear old friend," said Bryan.

"But I will call at your grandfather's, and tell them—"

"Not of the bank note," interrupted Bryan; "that comes from Sir Cecil, you know."

"No," said John: "of your having agreed with Tobin; for I know it will give them pleasure, and most of all to your aunt. I will make haste, or they will be gone to bed."

Bryan saw him, instead of opening the gate of the farm-yard, leap over it with more than the agility of a man of fifty-five.

Bryan's heart was filled with joy: it had never before been in his power to be generous. He returned into the farmer's parlour, and was soon led to a neatly-furnished bed-room, between the landing at the head of the great staircase, and a passage leading to a back stair, which descended to the kitchen. Our hero kneeled down by his humble bed, and added to his prayers a thanksgiving for having been inspired to do a good work. This good work obtained for him a profound and refreshing sleep: he woke not till the rays of the sun, darting through his unshuttered window, had thrown on the opposite side of the room a strong reflected light. "Where am I?" said he to himself, as the mysterious operations of our nature restored the suspended faculties. The last five hours of the former day appeared like the work of enchantment, that had transformed him from what he had been to what then he was. He felt as if it was necessary for him to rise, that he might be more assured of his actual state of existence. As he dressed, and made his *toilette*—what a word in such a chamber!—he heard Rosa singing in the dairy below; he looked out into the garden, separated by a stone wall from the farm-yard on the left; he saw beyond a country wild and dreary, yet studded with the habitations of men, and bearing the impress of their labours. Again he directed his view to the farm-yard; its corn-stacks, and hay-stacks, and pea-stacks; its barns, and other buildings, with the use of which he was soon to be well acquainted; he felt a turbulent contradiction within him, from the consciousness of the wide range of the capacities of his mind compared with his present condition. "Oh, I remember," he soliloquised playfully with his own sensations; "this is farmer Tobin's, and I

am his farming pupil. Well, be it so; to worse was I born. But let me be serious," and he commended himself fervently to Him who "respecteth not the persons of men;" to Him who, when he came into the world, chose poverty as His lot, and brought glad tidings to the poor; to Him, the source of that charity which will form of all mankind one brotherhood. As he descended the narrow staircase, it occurred to him that he would make Rosa happy, by telling her of the marriage present made to her brother in the name of Sir Cecil Foxglove; she would otherwise probably not hear of it till the morrow, and why not make her rejoice one day sooner? He was rewarded for his benevolence, by witnessing the delight the news imparted to her. Thus is the giver blessed in his gifts, over and above that higher recompense assured to all who perform works of mercy.

"How did you like your room, Bryan?" she asked.

"It is larger than what I had in college, and the bed not much harder."

"There was a great stir made last night," said Rosa, "after the mistress saw you: while you were talking with the master, the bed-room was smartened up for you, as if you had been as great a gentleman as the squire of Westbury: and troth I hope you will be one of these days."

Bryan was surprised that the furniture of his room should have been the result of any extraordinary effort: to him it had exhibited monastic poverty. He remembered to have read in the beautifully written life, by the Abbé Primord, of the Princess Louise, daughter of Louis XV. of France, who made herself a Carmelite nun of St. Denis, that, among other hardships, she found great difficulty in reconciling herself to the use of the *common towel* of the religious; and he reasoned with himself, "Why should the virtues of the convent be impracticable in the world? The meaning and the spirit of piety is the same everywhere; its end is everywhere attainable."

He found his grandfather seated at the door of the cabin; his mother busied within it; his aunt was at work on Mr. Tobin's farm. She returned to breakfast, during which they talked of Bryan's new situation.

"Mr. Tobin says I must get a working dress," said he; "where can I buy what I shall want?"

Lawrence replied, "At Mr. Larkin's, the draper's shop, you will find all you will want; he sells things for country people ready made."

"Larkin!" cried Bryan, "that must be the father of my most intimate and dearest friend at college; we were first acquainted as being not only Irishmen but townsmen; his father was said to be a shopkeeper at Athlone. How strange a thing is memory: the perturbed state I was in for all the last evening prevented my recollecting him, though I had reckoned, throughout my journey, on the pleasure I should have in seeing young Larkin again. He left college little more than a year ago. Where is he now?"

They of whom he inquired could give no information; and with this new inducement, Bryan hastened to Athlone. Calling at Larkin's shop, he was informed by the father that his son was living in the priest's house; that he had entered the ecclesiastical state, having been ordained subdeacon. To the priest's house, Bryan directed his steps; the door of the chapel was open; he entered, and heard the bell announcing the "Sanctus;" he took his place for kneeling, and continued till the end of the celebration of the holy mysteries.

After the mass, Bryan went to the house, which, as is usual, was close to the chapel. He was shewn into a room where visitors or applicants were wont to be received, and soon after his friend appeared. "Larkin!" "O'Meara!" both cried out at the same moment.

"Our friendship," said Bryan, "wanted not correspondence by letters to maintain it. When we parted, we said, 'if we meet again we will renew it; if not, the incidents of the life of either of us will, we are persuaded, make no change in our sentiments towards each other; and with this thought we must solace ourselves.'"

"Besides," said Larkin, "my life is to be uniform and laborious in the service of others: their hopes, and griefs, and fears, are to be mine; and in these I cannot call on the sympathy of another. You know my story; what is yours?"

"Your story is not quite told, Larkin," said O'Meara; "tell me, does your mind still retain that tinge of meek melancholy, gilding and polishing, and rendering it delicate, so that we were afraid to touch it rudely?"

"It was something aggravated by confinement in college," said Larkin; "and though relieved by my return to my family and country, has been renewed by the miseries I witness here. It is my constitutional temperament; but do not think me unhappy. There are two sorts of happiness: that of men who forget themselves, and that of men who reflect upon themselves and on others: this latter sort may not be joyful, but it is tranquil. Thomas à Kempis says he wonders that any one, who considers his own and others' sins and the ills of life, can ever perfectly rejoice in this miserable world."

"It has been observed," said O'Meara, "that there is a mixture of melancholy in true happiness. I can apprehend how such admixture may purify and elevate happiness, and I believe yours to be of this nature."

"I thank you, O'Meara, for your good opinion," said Larkin; "I ought to possess all that your friendship can wish or suppose of good, for I am to be ordained priest next Pentecost. Now, again I say, tell me what has befallen you since I left you in college a year and half ago."

Bryan gave him his full confidence in every thing but the tender secret of his heart.

Larkin resumed: "As to your being such a renegado as to refuse to take service with me, I will only say, we ought to be sorry to lose you: as to your capital, your best way will be to desire some solicitor to procure you an investment for it in land, or in a farm, that you may have a home so soon as your new education is completed."

"Now, if you duly consider all circumstances, there is nothing so very wonderful in it," Bryan replied; "but, be that as it may, I will beg of you to speak for me to an attorney about my business, as I wish to be known only as a 'gentle shepherd.'"

"Aye, 'the shepherd of the Shannon,'" said Larkin, smiling; "you began to learn to pipe, I remember, before I left college; you will soon have your flock, and then you will want nothing but your crook, that your portrait may adorn a vignette; but those same crooks, I fear, are only Arcadian, for they are never seen now-a-days. Why is this?"

"I do not know," said Bryan; "I will ask Mr. Tobin. I am now, however, going to your father's shop; for

though your vignette shepherds are always in the height of the fashion, yet a sober college suit of black is too fine for a shepherd in real life."

When the bargains were concluded, and the money paid, Bryan took his way up the hill, on his return home. Lost in thought, as he came to the brow of the hill, instead of taking the foot-path that led to the dale, he took one to the right hand, that brought him out on the turnpike road. There he saw three little girls, from ten to four years old, with a wheelbarrow, gathering the dung that had fallen from horses passing along the road. A gentleman, or one who bore the semblance, was coming along on horseback; the horse started at the wheelbarrow; the rider had great difficulty in making his horse pass by it; he was irritated, and cried out to the three children, in a good English accent, "You little d—d beggarly brats, what do you frighten my horse for?"

The poor children were now as much frightened at the gentleman, as the horse was frightened at them; and endeavouring to move the wheelbarrow to the side of the road, they overturned it; at this, the horse bolted, and sprung forward; the gentleman was borne out of sight.

Bryan went up to the children, who were crying to one another, "What will we do? we cannot lift up the wheelbarrow."

"I will set it upright for you," said our hero; and he did so accordingly.

"Thank you kindly, Sir, your honour," said the eldest girl, dropping her courtesies at each title, with respectful awe-struck timidity.

"Who was that gentleman?" inquired O'Meara.

"Squire James, of Westbury, your honour."

"What is this horse-dung for?" asked Bryan.

"For the potato-ground, your honour."

"Are you all three sisters?"

"Yes, your honour."

"And what is your name?"

"Sure, I am Mary Bryan, and that is Betsy Bryan, and the youngest is Biddy Bryan."

"Aye," said our hero, "she was called after her aunt, O'Meara. Give my love to your father and mother."

"Yes, your honour," said the little Mary Bryan.

CHAPTER XXIV.

On the following morning, Bryan, clad in his new habiliments, led his mother to the chapel some time before the beginning of the earliest mass, that an interval might be given them to make ready for partaking of the holy sacrifice. Bridget had her place on one of the lowest benches; between these and the door, stood those who, though crowded while standing upright, yet found room for kneeling; some of them even for prostration on the pavement. In this crowd, was Bryan, undistinguished by his exterior.

But of what weight were these humiliating circumstances, when the mother and the son approached the rails of the sanctuary? The fervour of divine love, a meek sense of man's unworthiness, gratitude for the inestimable benefits of the Redeemer; such were the sentiments that filled their hearts.

There are human affections, laudable and excellent in their nature, which, when referred to the glory of God and regulated according to his will, become more intense and delightful, while they are thus elevated and sanctified. Such were the mutual dispositions of this mother and this son.

They pursued their homeward path in silent meditation: they reached the cabin. The morning meal concluded, Laurence and Teresa went to high mass. The mother and son were now alone; when at length Bryan said, "Mother, do you judge that Moylan did wrong in communicating to me his conversation with you after the death of my father? Surely, at the age at which I am arrived, it was well that I should know all that might increase, if that were possible, my respect and gratitude towards you."

"I do not blame Moylan, my son," said Bridget; "I am contented that he told you of my refusing a second marriage; I did so, however, not entirely on your account, my dear Bryan," she said, with a smile of maternal affection, "but from my love of your dear father, that did not end with his life, nor will end in this world but with mine."

"And now, mother," said Bryan, after a thoughtful

silent combat with himself, "that we may be thoroughly known to each other, and that I may repay the confidence that has been placed in me in your regard, by concealing nothing from you that regards myself, I will tell you that, if ever you talk to me of marriage, you will vex my inmost soul."

She looked at him with curiosity, and female sagacity apprehended the meaning which he in truth intended to convey. "There is then one in England who has gained your heart?"

He wished to evade an entire confidence. "I have been in France and Italy, mother!"

"If you will not tell me who it is, Bryan, I will not ask, but depend on you for having made a good choice; only this—are you engaged?"

"Nothing," he said, "but her marriage to another shall set me free!"

"How is this Bryan?" the mother asked, "is not your love returned?"

"It is, mother! I cannot doubt it!"

"Then what hinders?"

"Ask not! suspect not! guess not!" he cried in great agitation, "I am without hope: I submit to my fate."

"My son," said Bridget, "I may be a comfort to you in this matter. I do suspect that you have set your affections on some one above you in birth and fortune; though you may be her equal in all other respects."

He blushed; and with more vehemence than before, entreated her to forbear questioning him.

"I need not question you, dear Bryan," she said, "I have only to mention one certain name."—He blushed deeper than before, grasped her hand, and burst into tears. "How mad! how foolish! dear Bryan," she said, "hopeless indeed!"

"Mother," he cried, "you said you might be a comfort to me. Do you, then, not think me too contemptible for her to look upon, for she does not. Even in this garb, I should not be despised, but pitied,—nay, honoured by her; more than that, I well know, is impossible."

Bridget attempted some words of advice and consolation; "I know it all, dear mother!" Bryan exclaimed:

"more conversation on this subject is only torture to me: let it end here. I need not tell you that this secret is for you alone. To obtain your compassion, and that there might be nothing hidden between us, I have revealed it to you."

"But dear, dear Bryan," she urged, "you will get the better of this misplaced ——."

"Never! never! mother! I will cherish it as long as I may—till she is the wife of another: it is the charm, the glory of my existence: it raises me above that very lot which deprives me of hope." And he added with a smile, "it will make my labour a play and sport to me, and I shall feel no humiliation in my servitude. Let us be cheerful, mother."

In the course of the Sunday, Bryan took occasion to inquire into the characters of Tobin, his wife and daughter. He learned that Tobin was imperious by temper and plausible from ostentation: one who desired to make his success in life the means of raising himself still higher; that with this view, he had tried to instruct himself, but had not yet attained to know of how much he was ignorant; that he courted popularity: and whether from this motive, or from charity, or because he therein found his profit, that he gave employment to many poor labourers, cultivating his farm as a large garden. That Mrs. Tobin was a busy housewife, and for the sake of peace, was left by her husband without control in her own department; that her mind had not risen with her husband's fortunes, but was totally occupied by domestic concerns: of their daughter, Petronilla, Bryan heard that she was engaged to be married—with this he was content.

"I was in England for a few weeks, four years ago," said Tobin, in the course of this evening, "and I met with a farmer who had supplied the neighbouring barracks with carrots, at a time when there were I know not how many thousand soldiers and prisoners of war there. Since my return, I have done the same for the barracks at Athlone. It is a very expensive cultivation, for the land must be dug and broken with a spade, and the crop carefully thinned and weeded. It does not pay over well, but it employs many hands."

Here Hugh and Mark entered, bearing a lantern from the stable, where they had taken care of the horse that had that day drawn the car of a party of pleasure. Tobin went on—"We have been delivering these carrots at the barracks for the last two days, and we have still two days more of the same work."

"You would rather starve the garrison than supply it, Sir," Bryan remarked.

Tobin looked at him fiercely: "Hold your tongue, young man," he said, "how do you know what I rather or not rather do?"

"I beg pardon, Sir," said Bryan, "I thank you for the caution. I do not *know*, certainly."

These last words were equivocal: they might mean that Bryan certainly did not know, or that he had not an absolute certainty. Tobin perceived with what sort of a man he had to do; and desirous, moreover, that his own Irish patriotism should not be impeached by the stern reproof he had thrown out, he turned the matter into a jest.—"Hugh, we must press this young man into his Majesty's service; I am afraid that he is disaffected! Let him go with you with the carts to-morrow to the barracks."

The morning came, and Bryan O'Meara commenced his noviciate as a farmer. Notwithstanding all his kindness and condescension, some little jealousy towards him had evidently lurked in the thoughts of some of his poorer relatives. In his cousin Mark, a labouring lad in Tobin's household, this feeling had vented itself in good-humoured, but satirical jokes on the elegant dress and appearance of our hero, who had borne all without resentment. A large party was now assembled, preparing to take the carrots to the barracks according to the orders given on the preceding evening. Mark, whose fun could hardly be restrained by the presence of his master, when he saw our hero take hold of the fork with three flattened tines or prongs, and shew his willingness by attempting to dig, burst out into laughter;—jeering and pointing in a mode that rather overpassed the verge of rustic politeness. Another lad seemed inclined to follow the example and join in the jeer. Hugh Moylan's wrath was kindled: he had conceived a strong affection for

Bryan. Bridget, moreover, was present; and to affront Bryan, was to offend her—a new cause of Hugh's resentment. He seized the long-lashed whip that lay near one of the carts, swung the lash in the air, and drew near to Mark, not only menacing, but fully resolved to inflict the blow. Mark, alarmed by the anger that beamed in the looks of Hugh, and seeing Bryan stepping towards him to prevent him from striking, thought he should be safe by being near to his protector. It thus happened that the blow, intended for Mark, lighted on the shoulders of Bryan.

He surmounted the sense of pain, and turning immediately to Mark, said, "I am glad to have saved you from that lash, coz, for it would have cut you in two, such a slim fellow as you are."

Hugh was beginning to make his excuses to Bryan, and tell his regret for the mishap, when he was stopped by witnessing a sudden revulsion of feeling on the part of Mark; who looked at Bryan with kindness and humbled self-reproach: the tear trembled in his eye.

"I have been very wrong in trying to vex you, cousin," he said; "I have been very saucy, but it was only in fun—and yet it was not fun quite entirely, for I bore you some spite, that you should be so much my betters." He stood as if unnerved, hardly supporting by one hand the tool with which he had been working, while the other hand fell dangling by his side, for he felt ashamed to offer it in token of reconciliation; "and yet," he went on, "it was not ill-will neither."

Bryan hastened to take the hand that Mark feared to hold out to him, "You bore me no ill-will Mark," he said, "we are good friends."

"But it was wicked in me," said Mark, "to say and do things on purpose to teaze you, out of envy."

"If you did so," said Bryan, "that was wicked, but it was natural."

"Sure, I am not naturally wicked, Bryan?" asked Mark.

"We are all naturally wicked, Mark, and naturally good too," O'Meara replied; "the goodness of your nature has now gotten the better. It was my purpose to let you go on till you saw your own unreasonableness;

this little accident has instructed you in an instant. Come, let us to our work."

"Do you forgive me, Bryan?" Mark still insisted.

"I do, with all my heart, Mark," said Bryan; "and if you ever wish me ill again, pray to God that it may come to pass."

"What do you mean, Bryan?" cried Mark, surprised, "do you think I will ever pray to God that any ill may befal you?"

"No Mark," said Bryan, "I am certain you will not, nor ever harm me in deeds. I only mean to give you a test, by which to try your thoughts and words:—*do not follow, in thought or by word, any purpose that you cannot commend to God by prayer.*"

Mark was struck by the sense of this counsel. Moylan and Bridget regarded Bryan with looks of more than approbation. Murphy, the son, was rebuked. Murphy, the father, said civilly, "I am afraid you will be tired Bryan; you have not been used to work."

"Not of late, Murphy; but I was born to it," our hero replied: then to Bridget, he said, "Do you remember, mother, the last time I went to work with you? it was just before I went to Mr. Piron's; we were dropping kidney beans into the drills; and Judy told me not to be so fussy; and Cameron said I seemed to think myself a greater man than my mother."

"I remember it well, dear," said Bridget.

If there were any who yet bore him a grudge on account of his gentility, our hero's simple and manly spirit had now reconciled them all.

One hour later, our hero was seen walking to and fro, like the captain of a ship of war on the quarter-deck; he had staid in command of four one-horse carts laden with the vegetable provisions which he had assisted in digging out of the earth. On the Dublin road, he had met a gentleman's carriage coming from Athlone; had held down his head for fear of being known, and raised it again laughing at his own folly. These contradictory movements were now to be exercised by the direct approach of one of that class which he had so lately abandoned.

An officer of the army, in full regimentals, with two epaulettes, mounted on a horse with military caparisons,

not only draw near, but stopped and inspected the contents of his four carts. What was our hero to do? To behave in character, no doubt. He touched his hat,—"They are for the barracks, your honour."

"I know it, farmer," said the major, such was his rank; "what are you waiting here for?"

"The man," said Bryan, "is gone to fetch a soldier to be with us from the time the carrots are weighed till they are delivered."

"It is only a form," said the major. The implied confidence in the good faith of the conductors of the carrots, drew from Bryan a civil acknowledgment; he touched his hat; the major was pleased, and somewhat surprised at his quick apprehension of the compliment—"Are you an Englishman, young man?" he asked; "you do not speak the brogue."

"No, your honour," Bryan replied, "my father was a labourer, who went to England for work, and died there. I was brought up in the country."

Bryan's feelings were on the rack, he wished the conversation to end; but its termination depended on what might be called *force majeure*, that is, on the will of the major. "These carrots look very dry," said he, "they must have been dug up on Saturday."

"Only the outside ones are dry, your honour," Bryan replied; "they were all dug up this morning."

The major rejoined, "If you say so, I will believe you."

Again Bryan involuntarily touched his hat; the novelty of his situation leading him to overdo his character, so that the officer thought him a common labourer. The major looked at him, and Bryan shrunk under the scrutiny. He was still more alarmed when the officer asked, "How long have you been in Ireland?"

"Five days, your honour."

"Do you live with Tobin?"

"Yes, your honour."

"How did you contrive to get into his family so quickly?"

"I was born in a cabin near his farm, and he knows my family."

This answer, much to Bryan's satisfaction, satisfied the

major; he turned his horse to ride away, but stopping a moment, and taking a shilling from his pocket, threw it on the road, saying, "There is something to drink his Majesty's health."

"You are in luck, Pat," said the servant, as he rode after his master.

Bryan could not stoop, in any sense of the word, to take up the shilling. While he looked at it, undetermined what to do with it, a very old woman came along the road in the direction opposite to that taken by his benefactor; she was clad in a tattered red cloak, supported her steps by a sort of crutch, and in place of an apron, bore a sack, half filled with some articles that rattled as she tottered along.

"Mother," said Bryan, "that officer wanted to enlist me; do you take up that shilling, you cannot be enlisted, you know."

"Och, but that is all blarney, dear," said the old woman, "your fun to make me pick up the silver."

"Nay," replied Bryan, "he told me it was to drink the king's health, and that would make a soldier of me, would it not?"

"I see what you are after, dear," she insisted, "you would make me believe it is not your own self that gives it to me; well, I will pick it up, but the divil a health will I drink, but only to your own sweet face."

And she held up her withered, and not very clean hand, and gave Bryan what is vulgarly called a chuck under the chin.

Drawing back from her civility, but gently, that he might not offend, he asked, "What do you carry in your apron, my good woman?"

"Mugs, made of horn, to drink out of," she replied, "and horn spoons and tobacco-boxes, and the like. Let me give you one of the cups, or a tobacco-box, jewel; sure you have a good right."

"Thank you, mistress," Bryan said; "I do not live in my own house, so I do not want the mug, and I have not learned to chew tobacco."

"Well, but you must take something of me," she insisted; "here take a horn spoon to remember me by."

"They will call me a *spooney*," said he, recollecting the honours of Alma Mater Cantabrigia.

"What signifies it what they call you, when you think how good you have been to a poor old woman? Take it, darling," she continued, joyfully, "and may every spoonful you put into your mouth do good to your heart."

Then, picking up a carrot that had fallen from the cart, wiping it with her cloak, and beginning to munch it, "I have been to the Lea farms and the dale this morning," she said, "and have eaten nothing but one potato that a woman gave me at the first cabin."

"That must have been my mother," said Bryan.

"Troth, and now I look at you, dear," said the woman, "I think you are like her. Do you know, I was afraid you were an Englishman; but if you are the son of that woman, I am sure you are a good youth. She got up from her seat, though I saw she was tired with work, and gave me the potato out of her own bowl, and talked with me like a good Christian, as she is. I am used to be driven away for a beggar, and scorned for a useless old woman; I am used to it, and can bear it: but when people treat me kindly, it melts my heart within me; and then I think on my own dear boy, my only son, that was murdered by the Sassenachs more than thirty years ago."

"Murdered!" exclaimed Bryan, "how was that?" for he saw it would be a relief to her to tell the story.

"Aye, sure he was murdered, dear; he was then a little younger than you are now, and a fine tall youth, like your own self. You have heard of the French that landed during the rebellion?"

"I have read of it, mother," said Bryan; "what had your son to do with them?"

"He joined them, dear; they were not above twelve hundred, and they were joined by above five thousand Irish. My poor Arthur was of the number. We lived near Castlebar; he set off to them as soon as they landed, and came back with them to near his own home. Well, the English army came against them, twenty thousand strong, and there was a fight, and the French surrendered."

"And the Irish? and your son?" Bryan asked, eagerly.

"Oh, they scampered away as fast as they could, for

they knew they would not be held to be prisoners of war. But there were some of them, likely to be the best soldiers, that the French had armed, and formed into company; poor dear Arthur was one of them: and they, when they saw the French were beaten, ran altogether into a bog where the cavalry could not follow them; but guns were pointed at them, and they were obliged to come out."

Here the old woman paused, and, as if fearing to approach the catastrophe, resumed: "My husband and I were in our cabin; the army had marched away with the French prisoners, all but a troop of the rear-guard, as they called it. Two troopers rode up to our cabin; I went out to speak to them, for I thought it safer for me than for a man; and I told them my husband could not talk English. 'No harm is meant to you,' said they; 'only, what men are there in the house?' 'Only my husband,' said I; 'we are elderly folks; our son has grown up and has left us.' 'We are gathering the country people,' said they, 'to come and bury the dead bodies; tell your good man to bring his tools and come;' I was glad it was no worse."

Again the poor woman seemed to struggle with her own feelings. "The dead bodies," said she, "were mainly in two lots, as one may call it, in two distant parts of the field of battle. 'I will go this way,' said my husband, 'to help to dig the pit; do you go to the other side with the men that will make the other pit, and then we shall know if *he* is amongst ———' and he stopped, for he could not say—amongst the dead. Think now, my dear youth," she said, pursuing her story, "think what we both suffered; each of us looking for our son among the slain. At last we met with looks of joy, for neither of us had found him; he is escaped! we thought. The commander of the troop called to the labourers when they had covered in the two pits. 'Your work is not quite done,' said he, 'go to that wood.' He pointed with his sword, and marched away with his troop; we all hurried to the wood. There all they that had thrown away their arms, and had run into the bog, and had cried for quarter and begged for mercy, there they had all of them been hanged by the neck; they were now cut

down, and lay scattered as they fell at the foot of the trees."

The poor old woman then covered her eyes with a movement of horror, while she shrieked out to Bryan—"Did you ever look upon the face of a strangled man? I saw him! I knew him again! my darling boy! my beloved Arthur! my husband saw him too; and never looked up again."

"Do not go on, my dear good woman," cried Bryan, "do not go on, for I cannot bear to hear any more."

"Oh, yes," said she, with an almost maniac smile of derision, "they said it was to teach us what rebellion was!"

"Yes, these are, these always have been their lessons," said Bryan. "Dear mother, I can speak no comfort to you, that is beyond all human power."

"No, do not try, jewel," she said, "I am quiet now; it has done me good to tell you: and I can weep again, and that will do me good." After the relief of tears, she went on: "My husband died soon after, and I became a beggar and a wanderer; but all will be over ere long, for I am drawing near my end; the merciful God be praised for it; and we may meet to live in His presence for ever."

Moylan now drew near with a soldier, and Bryan explained to the old woman that he must go on to the barracks. "Then, you will not forget Nora O'Sullivan, dear?" she said.

"Never! never! to the latest day of my life," he cried; "call sometimes on my mother, Nora; if I do not then see you, I shall hear of you. May God bless you."

"May the blessed Virgin pray for you; a tender-hearted youth as you are," said Nora.

The carts were driven through the town and over the bridge, and into a yard close by the barracks, and there tilted into a large barn or coach-house. It was the custom, that all provisions delivered in the preceding week were paid for on the Monday morning following; and Bryan had received from Tobin a bill of the carrots before sent in: he was now requested to take this bill into the steward's office. This office had an ante-room, with its window to the yard; the window of the steward's room

looked into one of the courts or squares of the building. Bryan waited in the outer room till his turn came. As the door of the steward's room was opened by those who came out or went in, he heard the shrieks and groans of a poor wretch under military punishment. When admitted, he carried his bill, with the tickets of the weighing engine as its vouchers, to the desk placed close to the window: it had a blind that prevented the steward, who was seated, from seeing into the court, or being seen from thence: but Bryan stood and saw, over the blind, what was passing there. While the steward looked over the account, Bryan, agitated and disgusted, turned his back to the window: this could hardly be done without turning his back, in some sort, on the steward also; who cried out to him—"Come, young man, do not give yourself airs, and pretend to so much compassion, unless you have a mind to be tied up and have a taste of the cat yourself."

Bryan fixed him with a look that implied, not fear of the menace nor resentment of the affront, but an appeal to whatever there might be in the steward's heart of pity for the sufferer. "I do not pretend, Sir," he said, steadily. The steward quailed under his look, and occupied himself with the account.

What Bryan experienced to be more harrowing to his soul than even the cries of the sufferer, were the intervals during which the cat-o'-nine-tails was delivered from one hand to another of those who inflicted the punishment. These pauses, not of repose, but of suspended torture, were appalling; he counted five of them; for while he staid there, the soldier received a hundred lashes; the transfer of the scourge taking place after every twenty strokes.

"Can you write, young man?" asked the steward.

"Yes, Sir."

"Then sign this receipt." Bryan complied. "Aye, a round O, of course," remarked the steward; "but you must say why you receive it."

"To pay it to Mr. Tobin," said Bryan.

"I do not care whom you pay it to," said the other, "you may cheat your master, if you will; but it must appear on the receipt that you are authorized. In what

capacity are you with this—what is his name—Tobin? Write, 'for my master.'"

To avoid renewed inquiry, he did so, and was released: and it was some consolation to him that the flogged man was, at the same moment, released also.

On his return homeward with Hugh and the unloaded vehicles, Bryan could converse on nothing but Arthur O'Sullivan, and the scene he had witnessed; hardly could he converse, so excited were his feelings. When he paid to Tobin what he had received at the office, "I hope the money is right," he said, "but if it is not, you must forgive me." Tobin first counted the money, then listened to what Bryan had to relate. "You are young in this world, Bryan," said Tobin; "especially in this world of Ireland. Compose yourself, my good fellow, and come to dinner."

Dinner is a word of cheering sound to the hungry, even though it be explained only by potatoes and buttermilk. The principal meal of our hero and the masters of Lea Hall was held at or about mid-day; but that of the farm-servants was delayed till evening, that they might not, by fulness, be unfitted for labour: an argument we have heard brought to prove it to be better for the poor that their food should be insufficient in quantity, and, in the opinion of those who suffer thus patiently the privations of others, in quality also: for these persons say that a labouring man may do without that animal food so indispensable to the rich, who live to eat. The poor eat to live.

CHAPTER XXV.

"Need I call you to-morrow, Bryan?" asked Mark, when they interchanged good night. "You were at prayers when I called you this morning: perhaps you can wake of yourself?"

"Do not trust me yet, Mark," said Bryan, "there is no harm in your looking in upon me even if I am at prayers. You say your prayers?"

"Sure; Hugh and I say our prayers every night and morning, Bryan. What do you take me for?"

"For a very good lad, Mark. I hope you pray too."

"I have told you so."

"You have told me that you say your prayers."

"And is not that praying?"

"It may be so or it may not. One may do either without the other."

Mark reflected a minute, then said, "You ought to have been a priest, Bryan."

"I wish to do you as much good as if I were one, Mark; as far as I can."

"You do me more good, I think, Bryan; for what the priest tells me seems to be fit only for very pious people; but what you tell me seems fit for such as me."

Bryan perceived that his cousin's thoughts were in a right train; and only added, "Let HIM live in us who loved us and delivered himself for us, and then we pray not only when saying our prayers, but even at our daily work."

They were going up stairs: as Mark went forward, Hugh turned into Bryan's room, and said with a sigh, "That is right, Bryan: your mother has taken from me all joy but what is to be found in a Christian's faith and hope."

"And is not that enough?" asked Bryan.

"Would you find it to be enough in your own case?" Hugh retorted.

Bryan was conscience-stricken,—he mused; forgetting that he had before him one who, spite of his low condition, was an experienced observer. Looking up, he saw that Hugh regarded him attentively: he became confused. At length he said, "You know in what sense I asked that question, Hugh."

"I do," said Hugh; "you meant that religion helps us to bear grief. But I asked a question too, Bryan; and," he added, remarking on Bryan's increased confusion, "and you have answered it. Good night. I have too much respect for your bringing up to ask any questions more."

With a faint smile, Bryan said, "We are fellow-suf-

ferers, Hugh: I am willing you should know thus much. We shall be the better friends."

"And so," said Bryan to himself, "with all my cleverness and my bringing-up, as he called it, I have betrayed myself to this countryman—this peasant. Well; if the gentry would put themselves on an equal footing with those whom they think their inferiors, they would be overmatched in sagacity. I too am crossed in love: Hugh has discovered it; and the friendship of the ploughman and the young farmer is henceforward to be quite sympathetic and sentimental. And why not? a wider range of knowledge is all the advantage I have over him. Nay, even she—I dare not name her—graceful and accomplished as she is—is not superior to my mother in those qualities and dispositions of the soul that truly elevate our nature. Hugh, your lesson is a good one: physician, heal thyself. Mine is a hard task; but to one without hope, it is indispensable."

On the Friday morning following, farmer Tobin requested our hero to take a basket and go to the ferry for some fish for the family. "It will be a pleasant walk for you," he said; "you have only to say where you come from, and the man will give you what we want. I settle with him every week."

Bryan descended the lane that led to the Shannon, and having hailed the ferry-boat to come from the other side of the river, stood admiring the noble stream that flowed before him. The boat was sculled across: Bryan entered it, and told his errand to the ferryman, who was also the fisherman. He stepped out on the opposite shore: "So now I am in Connaught!" Bryan said to himself; and began a train of reflection on the fortunes of his family, when it was broken in upon by Daly (that was the fisherman's name), who put two large pike into the basket, where they soon gasped and floundered themselves to death. They had been taken out of a tub or tank with holes, sunk into the river close under the bank. "You will want some eels too," said Daly, taking off the cover of another reservoir: "if they are not wanted for yourselves, they will do for the servants. I know no farmer, nor gentleman neither for the matter of that, who keeps a better house than Tobin; he gives his men

fish on days of abstinence: to be sure our Shannon makes fish very cheap. Will you plase to give me the eels out of the tub, while I string them?"

Bryan tried; but lost his hold of the one he had taken up, and let it glide into the river.

"You blundering blockhead!" cried Daly; but recollecting himself, "I did not mean that, and I beg your pardon, Sir. You may be good for something in time," he added with a significant glance which our hero could not then interpret. Then calling his son from the other side of the cabin; "Here, Tom," he said, "come, give me the eels; Mr. Bryan lets them slip away."

"You know my name," observed our hero.

"Know your name!" cried Daly. "Do you know where your little sister is buried?"

"I do not know the place," said Bryan.

"But I do; for I carried her to her grave myself, three-and-twenty years ago," said the fisherman.

"It was in harvest-time," Daly continued; "I called at your father's cabin, for I had been told that the baby was very ill: she was a pretty little dear, with blue eyes; not at all like you, but like her father: she was stout on her feet, and had begun to talk. I used to play with her often. You may think how grieved I was, when your mother called me into the bed-place, and whispered, 'Daly, the babe is dying.' In truth, there it was lying on the bed in its last agony. "I will go call Abert,' said I. 'No, do not leave me,' your mother said; 'he will be here in an instant:' and while she spoke he came in, threw himself on the bed by the side of the baby, and put one harm under her, and seemed almost beside himself while he gazed on the face of the dear infant. Your mother kneeled at her side. I stood at the foot of the bed. In a very few minutes Albert gave a loud shriek: the child had breathed its last breath. 'May our last end be like hers,' I said. You know what a good woman your mother is, and may imagine how she behaved: the women always beat us at these times. Your poor father could hardly be persuaded to quit his hold of the body, though life was gone. As I left the cabin, I asked if I could do any thing for them; your mother followed me to the door: 'Albert must go to his reaping again; and I will

not leave the darling. Order a coffin, and speak to the priest.' 'It is what a friend ought to do for you,' I replied."

Bryan was much affected by this story, which the fisherman related in a hurried and rugged manner; but with much feeling. He went on: "The next evening I went and saw the dear little virgin laid in her coffin; a crown of buds of white roses and of jessamine on its head. The priest came, put on his white stole, and read the office of the Church for infants."

Bryan could not help saying, "A beautiful composition it is; full of jubilation and hope."

Daly proceeded: "When the priest was gone, I began to fasten down the lid of the coffin; before I did so, your mother took the baby's clay-cold hand: 'Be happy and pray for us,' she said to the child; but she looked up to heaven. Your father spread a white linen cloth over the coffin, for a pall: he tried to take it in his arm to carry it to the grave. 'I cannot do it!' said he, and he set it down again, and he looked at me. I understood him. 'You are tired, Albert dear,' said Bridget; 'Daly will go with us; your father or your mother will stay with you.' 'No,' said he, 'leave me alone with God.' He was one of the most tender-hearted men I ever knew. I supported your mother with one arm, and bore the little coffin under the other: your grandfather and grandmother followed to the burying-ground of the old monastery. I led your mother back to the cabin, and left her and Albert very mournful." Then, with that effort which is sometimes made to escape from fine feeling, he added, "Next summer you came to comfort them; and there you stand; a great scholar, forsooth, that does not know how to take hold of an eel."

Soon after his return home, Bryan observed Rosa drawing the first eel from the string: "We may save the poor creature a part of the journey back again up the whole length of the willow branch," said he; at the same time cutting the withy close to the head of the outermost eel. If we shall save so much of torture to one living creature, we have not written in vain.

On the following day, Bryan attended his grandfather to high mass. On their return, after surmounting the

hill, the old man stopped through fatigue, and taking off his hat of straw, pressed his wrinkled forehead; then drawing before his eyes a lock of his long grey hair, and looking down on his trembling and feeble limbs, and regarding his grandson in the vigour of youthful comeliness, he exclaimed, "Bryan, I was what you are; you will be what I am." Words expressing this thought have been inscribed on marble;* but the necessity of versification, diverted them from the natural order in which Laurence rendered them: *Sum quod eris, fueramque quod es: pro me, precor, ora.*

Happy they whom the duties, the amusements, and the affairs of life do not cause to lose sight of its termination! Bryan had tutored his soul to be one of this number: he passed the afternoon in his grandfather's cabin; his clarionet summoned the neighbours to its door; he accompanied them in the festive sports; was received as a popular favourite amongst them; and then returning home, concluded the day by joining in the prayers of the family.

But undisturbed rest was not, for that night, to be his portion.

On retiring to his chamber, he saw a paper, folded like a letter, lying on his bed; the place where it was found, implied that it was intended for him, though there was no superscription: he opened it and read, written in a fair but disguised hand-writing, "BRYAN, SON OF ALBERT, IF YOU LOVE YOUR COUNTRY, GO TO YOUR SISTER'S GRAVE AT MIDNIGHT. FAIL NOT: A FRIEND INVITES. BE SECRET."

The concluding admonition made him forego his first purpose, to call on Hugh for advice. He considered the matter a few moments; at length it occurred to him that he did not know the place of the grave, nor the way to it: and he determined to go to rest. If the invitation were urgent, it would be repeated: if not, he inferred it to be without consequence.

* On a tombstone in the church at Alderkirk, Lincolnshire. I remember, as a boy, climbing up to the window behind the altar: on the sill, was a cross of gilt wood, laid flat, and covered with the dust that had doubtless accumulated since the Reformation. It probably lies there even yet.—J. R. B.

After a sleep of nearly three hours, he was roused by a noise at his window, as of the end of a small pole or stick beating against it. He rose and opened his casement. To the question, "Who is there?" a voice, which he instantly recognized as that of Daly the fisherman, answered, "I have bethought myself that you were never there; I will shew you where it is. Come down."

"Why should I go there now, at this time of the night?"

"You will know when you are there."

"Did you write the note?"

"No."

It was evident to Bryan that Daly knew of the note, though written by another. Hugh could not write; Bryan had, for this reason, been requested to settle the account at the barracks. He doubted whether Tobin might not be at the bottom of the affair. While he demurred, the voice, hoarsely whispering, muttered, "Will you come down or not?"

"I will," answered Bryan; and shutting the casement, he hastened to dress himself and went down to the door into the farm-yard; which, in confirmation of his suspicion of Tobin, he found unbolted.

"Why have you been so long?" asked Daly.

"I left my brogues at the foot of the stairs, and they were mixed with the others."

"You must please to take good care that it is not so another time."

"Another time! am I to be called on again?"

"Sure, if Ireland wants you."

"I will come wherever Ireland calls."

"You are of the right stuff. Let us go: we are late."

They crossed the lane that bounded Lea Hall farm on the north, leading down to the Shannon. They walked over pastures and fields of stubble; Daly finding, with readiness, a gap in every hedge, while he took care in his progress, to keep close to the hedge on his right hand. They were just below the brow of the hill: they heard the noise of horses' hoofs on the road: "Is it not a patrol?" said Daly. He stopped till the sound was lost in the distance.

At length they entered a field and saw before them two

lofty elms that overshadowed the two corners of a ruined edifice. Daly, who had hitherto observed and imposed silence, now whispered, "This is the old church, all that is left of it." At the same moment, ten men were seen issuing from one side of the building. "Let them pass: do not speak," said Daly, turning away his head. When he turned again, Bryan perceived that he had covered his face with a black mask. The men passed by; one of them saying, "They wait for you." The two went on towards the ruin: the moon shone athwart the eastern window; its rays fell, through the unglazed and broken tracery-work, on the southern side of one of the elms; the other was left in shade. While they stood between the trees, Daly touched with his foot the head-stone of a little mouldering heap: "She rests in peace," he said. "I wish we did so too." He took the arm of Bryan, adding "you cannot stay here now."

They went along the southern side of the chancel or sanctuary, usually respected in such ruins more than the other parts of the sacred building; and in this instance, though unroofed, yet almost entire. The church presented, on one side, only a broken range of pillars and gothic windows, connecting the chancel with a tower at its western end. The area was covered with coarse grass and weeds, except that, where the transept joined on to the chancel, a high heap of stones and rubbish seemed to exclude all entrance. "Follow me," said Daly. Bryan obeyed; and clambering after him over the heap, descended on its inner side.

There were seen ten men in masks, standing round a fire without flame, but red peat ashes, whose glow, shed upon their forms, left it free to the fancy to call them other than human. Daly stopped, and making a slight noise with his hands, gave a signal to nine others who came from the two corners of the chancel formed by its side walls and the heap that projected inwards. These nine, with Bryan and his conductor, drew near to the sombre fire. The ten masked opened on each side, as if to receive them. At this moment, a material of quick combustion was thrown on the fire; a blaze arose, and Bryan perceived among the nine unmasked, some faces that were known to him:—Walter Conolly, and Maurice,

the younger brother of Larkin; with the latter he interchanged a few words.

The chief of the eleven, for Daly had now joined the masks, said in a low and measured tone:

"It is not permitted to say aught, but what all may know. What did you say to him?"

"I asked," replied Bryan, "if his brother knew of his coming here: and he told me."

"He himself must repeat his own words: what did you tell him?"

"That my father knew and approved of it," said Maurice.

"It is well." Saying this, the chief made a sign to Daly, who approached him of the unmasked, that was the outermost of the semicircle formed by them on the eastern side of the fire, and led him to the chief, seated on a stone, in the centre of the semicircle formed by the masks on the eastern side. In a subdued voice, but loud enough to be heard in the dead silence, hardly broken even by the breathing of those around, the chief said to the one brought near to him,

"Will you be true to the cause of Ireland?"

He to whom the question was proposed, held up his right hand, and in a firm, though low tone, exclaimed, "I will!"

All were successively presented to the chief. Some added to the affirmation words indicative of their zeal for their country.

The son of the fisherman, one of those who were to be initiated, had stood near to Bryan and detained him, so that he was the last who approached the chief. When interrogated, he said,—

"My heart vibrates to that call, as the strings of the harp tremble to the breeze from Connaught."

A voice, which Bryan knew to be that of Tobin, murmured forth,—

"To the blast from Leinster!"

"To the storm from Ulster!"

"To the whirlwind from Munster!" hoarsely subjoined two other voices.

"You are a chief of ten," he who presided said to

Bryan: "retire with your company; be silent; disperse! — be not more than two together."

When Bryan had withdrawn from before the president, the nine who had been submitted to his sway came and touched, successively, his right hand in token of fealty. They then ascended the heap that inclosed the chancel, the younger Daly still detaining the "Chief of ten," and aiding him to surmount the uneven surface. "You will not be able to find the gaps of the hedges without me," said Daly: "let the others go on." When the eight were out of sight, ten others appeared and began to clamber over the rubbish.

"How many companies will be enrolled to-night?" Bryan asked of his new associate, as they retraced the path homewards.

"I do not know."

"Who were the men in masks?"

"What do you think they were masked for?"

"What shall I have to do?"

"To wait for orders."

"When will they be given?"

"When the time comes."

"The time for what?"

"The time for giving orders."

"It is useless to question you."

"I tell you all I know."

"Can you tell me why I am chief of ten rather than you, who are older than I am?"

"They thought your being acquainted with England might be of use: and you will be advanced further very quickly."

"Why was I not forewarned of all this?"

"There would have been need of too much explanation. We knew that you would not hang back when put to it."

They came to the lane leading to the ferry.

"You know your way home, now," said Daly, and turning downwards, left him alone.

CHAPTER XXVI.

On the Thursday of this week, while the family were assembled in the hall at breakfast, the gossoon brought in a letter which he took to the master's table. Tobin looked at the address and seemed well pleased; for he there read a title rarely accorded to him. It was to "Bryan O'Meara, at Theobald Tobin's, Esq., Lea Hall, Athlone, Ireland."

"It is for your cousin," said he to the boy; "do you pretend to be a post-man, and cannot read a direction?"

"Sure, I thought it was to go to you first, Sir," the boy replied.

The letter was from Mr. Harrison, dated Willoughby, 12th Sept. 17—. "My Dear Bryan:—I feel myself unworthy to praise, as it deserves, your admirable resolve to devote yourself to a life including all the merit, though not the obligations, of those pious retreats which the indifference of a world become Christian, but still the world, first recommended to the fathers of the desert, and afterwards to all the nations professing the true faith. Nay, a life of religion has more merit when concealed by the discharge of all our duties to society, than when withdrawn into privacy and seclusion. Convents are excellent institutions, as creating families united by a spiritual bond, a new and superhuman sympathy; but the poverty of monks and nuns of later ages is but a fiction. You suffer all its inconveniences and humiliations. They exhort each other to Christian perfection, to which it is to be presumed they are all of them inclined; but your example will excite the desire of it in the minds of many who, as yet, view it with distant and hopeless respect. I know you will not thank me for lauding you: still less, if I delay any longer to acquaint you with what will equally surprise and delight you: namely, that it is highly probable that Arabella Foxglove will become a Catholic. Be surprised, but be tranquil. It was in Italy, two or three years since, that her doubts and inquiries commenced. Since her return, she has compared the claims of her own and of our religion. She consulted the Abbé

Piron, who professed himself willing to instruct her, on the simple condition that she would admit the authority of the Catholic Church. All this she confided to me when I saw her on the day after parting from you: moreover, that her father had left her at full liberty to comply with the dictates, whatever they may be hereafter, of her own conscience.

"I had a long conversation with her, which I need not detail to you, who are aware of the confusion subsisting in Protestant minds on this subject. My great difficulty was to make her believe her own creed. I begged of her, if she would not abide by her own book of Common Prayer, to invent any other mode of faith that might be more agreeable to her; but I shewed that it was essential that there should be some ground of argument between us. Having summarily passed in review the articles of faith which it pleased the Reformers to retain, we came to those very few which they have thought fit to reject. She perceived that all rested on the same foundation, and was astonished to find that she had been almost a Catholic all her life, without suspecting it. In conclusion, I gave her Bishop Milner's 'End of Controversy.' She studied it, and, at the very time when you, my dear Bryan, were employed in your grandfather's cabin in writing to me, she was holding a conference with the Abbé that ended in her becoming a catechumen.

"By her desire, I rode over to Denham to inform her father of the step, and to beg of him to communicate it to her brother; but not yet to her mother. Charles has since visited his sister. He brought forward all the worldly motives that ought to divert her from her purpose. Having no positive creed of his own, he could offer no other. He attempted ridicule, but she was serious,—persuasion, but she was firm; and she succeeded in inspiring him with respect for her conscientious conviction, and in assuring him, notwithstanding his prevention to the contrary, that her love for her relations would not be lessened by her conversion. In fact, it is only from her mother that she will differ more than now, and their future mutual kindness depends on Lady Foxglove.

"To ascertain her own view of the result of her inquiries, I asked if I might inform you of this affair?

telling her I should be unwilling to excite hopes that were to be disappointed.

"'Acquaint Mr. O'Meara with the present state of things,' she said; 'I have hardly a doubt left. I want nothing but instruction. He will rejoice that my father and brother behave so well on this occasion. His mother and himself will pray for me.'

"She spoke in an equable tone, and without betraying any sentiment but what she expressed in words.

"Charles's marriage with Clara will take place in about six weeks' time.

"To all our friends except the Abbé, I have spoken of you, according to your instructions, as living, for the purpose of learning agriculture, with one who practises it on a large scale. You would have too much of present reward were I to repeat the terms in which the Abbé speaks of the example you give, worthy of the zeal and piety of the early ages of the Church. He sends you his affectionate blessing and fervent exhortation to perseverance.

"Your mother, dear Bryan, taught you to breathe the love of God from your cradle. My Protestant education —but it is my own fault. On my reconciliation to the Church, a life of penitence and mortification became known to me in its merits, and in the inducements to adopt it. The examples by which it has been recommended in all ages, were stripped of the veil which had hitherto clouded them. I ought to have adopted it; but a fancy that I might be more useful by conforming to the usages of ordinary life than by an eremitical or anchoretical retreat from it, deceived me. I strove not to persevere in the path of Christian perfection. But it may not yet be too late. When you shall be settled, I will join you, and live in your neighbourhood. A small apartment will suffice. I will discard a vain, troublesome domestic establishment, that, like you, I may devote my income to the service of my poor brethren: such I may find in your country; who, having no legal claim on the property of others, are properly and really poor. Such is the plan I sometimes sketch out to myself. We will talk of it when we meet.

"Adieu, my dear Bryan. You know the tender interest I take in your health and welfare will make me

happy to hear from you at all times. I will write to inform you of Arabella's reception into the Church, which, I believe, will not be long delayed, that you and yours may rejoice in it in the spirit of charity. Present my kind regards to all the dwellers under your paternal roof. Your ever affectionate friend, "H. H."

The chief article of intelligence in this letter conveyed extreme joy to the heart of Bryan, ever zealous for the glory of God. But he could not help being mortified by the caution mingled with his friend's communication. From the course of her proceedings, it was evident that her conversion was independent of her preference of himself. It would have been unworthy of herself had it been otherwise; but why should his friend take such pains to point this out to him? Why should he avoid all reference to the mutual sentiments, the existence of which had been confided to him? After a long strife within him, his judgment convinced him that all this was right—that Arabella's conversion, if it should take place, would not, in the least, change their worldly relation to each other. He determined to await as quietly as he might for the news of so desirable an event; for he felt it would be too painful for him to answer his friend's letter, as he could neither avoid the topic nor speak of it with the required calmness. By a strong effort, he reduced his mind to a tranquil state, with one more motive of consolation, in which "the dwellers of the cabin" cordially participated.

In the first week of November, Hugh Moylan was ordered to go to a place a few miles westward of Roscommon, and about eighteen miles distant from Lea Hall, to drive home some steers. Wishing to visit that part of the country, our hero accompanied the other; and, at mid-day, the two crossed the ferry and soon arrived at the road leading to Roscommon. They conversed tranquilly and affectionately.

"I think," said Bryan, "we love one another better than we might have done, had you been my father-in-law."

"You pity me, Bryan," said Hugh, "and I take that as a great kindness."

They mounted a steep hill, and Hugh led Bryan to a

little distance on one side of the road, where from a height they looked down on a pleasant and fertile valley, watered by a meandering stream, and sheltered from the north and east by woods bearing the varied tints of an autumnal foliage. On the southern slope of the hill opposite to them, stood a handsome modern house, with its extensive range of offices, its shrubberies and gardens.

"A very pretty view this, Hugh," said Bryan; "thank you for bringing me to see it. Whom does the place belong to?"

"To Squire James. This is Westbury. It did belong to your forefathers."

Contending emotions struggled in the soul of Bryan. Clad in the garb of a Connaught farmer, relieved from involuntary poverty by the bounty of strangers obtained at the price of his father's life, and now bent on a servile errand with a companion, ranked, like himself, among the low and base of mankind; there he stood, contemplating the mansion of a lordly proprietor, and the wide domain that supplied the means of affluence and luxury.

"Can you bear this, my dear young friend?" said Hugh, taking him by the arm and looking in his face, with gentle sympathy.

Bryan still gazed: at length, he answered,

"Hugh, I can bear it!" and sinking on his knees, he exclaimed,

"Great God, thy will be done: by thy inscrutable providence, it is permitted that the earth is filled with violence: aid me to use that violence on myself by which the Kingdom of Heaven is taken by force."

He then asked,—

"What is that tower that crowns the hill standing forward into the valley on our left?"

Hugh answered,—

"Albert O'Meara was an old man at the time of the battle of the Boyne: his son fought there: I need not tell you on whose side. His land was forfeited; but they suffered him to end his days in that tower; his son received a small yearly allowance from the new lord; but his grandsons, who had been sent abroad when children, and did not return till after their father's death, were reduced to work for their daily bread. The eldest of

them, called Albert, died unmarried; the younger, Laurence, passed over the Shannon, into Westmeath; for he could not bear to bring up his children near to the place where his family had flourished. His eldest son was Laurence, your grandfather."

"Cannot we see that tower, Hugh?"

"We will try: it is all that remains of the old building;—the house is a new one."

They returned to the road they had quitted for the purpose of this painful survey. At the bottom of the hill which they now descended, was the porter's lodge. Hugh knocked at the door; but waited till the porter should speak, that he might hear his accent; this encouraged him to ask of him,—

"Are you a true Irishman?"

"What right have you to doubt it?"

"If you are, here is the real master," said Hugh, laying his hand on Bryan's shoulder; "the true O'Meara."

"I know the name well," said the porter, looking at Bryan, whose tranquil and dignified countenance inspired him with pity and respect.

"I am the third," said Bryan, "from the last of my family born on the land. I only want to see the tower where my ancestor died."

"It would be as much as my place is worth," said the porter, "to shew it to you if it was known who you are."

"You can pretend that we are far-off cousins of yours," said Hugh.

The man demurred: at length, he said,—

"I am sorry for your case, master; but it is the case of many an honest man, and there is no help for it;—if that is any comfort to you. Come along with me."

He led the way in front of the house, at some distance from it; then along a walk that became, as they proceeded, more rough and neglected; then up a flight of broken stone steps; till they stood on the platform on which was built the tower of four stories in height, terminating in an embattled wall. They went in at a door in a turret, at one corner. Bryan impatiently ascended the winding staircase. He stopped not till he arrived at another door, that opened on the flat roof. The view was extensive, commanding the lakes, and the

course of the Shannon, with the fortress of Athlone. After a short survey, Bryan could not forbear from bending his eyes more immediately beneath him, and looking on the lands that might have been his own. In this moment he was found by Hugh and the porter, who had followed him up the stairs.

"Do not do yourself a mischief, my young O'Meara," said the porter.

"What mischief?" Bryan asked.

"Do not throw yourself down, out of spite."

"You do not know *him*," said Hugh.

They went down into the uppermost of the four rooms of the tower.

"Here," the porter said, "as I have been told, the last Irish owner died,—on that old bedstead."

He pointed to what was the only furniture of the deserted chamber. Bryan took out his clasped knife, and cut off a small piece of the wood, saying,—

"I will try not to covet any thing but this relic."

His companions looked on in silence.

The rooms on the second and that on the first floor, presented nothing that he could covet, even sentimentally. The ground-floor appeared to have been used as a kitchen; there was an old grate with some peat or wood ashes still left under it.

As they drew near the mansion, on their return, "Come," said the porter, "I can get you some beer from the house, if you will; they are hospitable folks, and will not grudge a drop of home-brewed to my cousins, as you are, you know."

"I could not swallow that," said Bryan.

"Nor I neither, for your sake," Hugh added.

"Troth, and you have had enough to choke you already," the porter remarked. "I wish you were the master; but—"

"Do not wish it for me: no doubt it is better as it is."

The Tower of Albert, the name by which Bryan spoke of his lost inheritance, had detained them so long, that the last two hours they were lighted by the moon: they arrived late at the place of their destination. The farmer, to whom Hugh was known, received them with much courtesy. He told them the steers would be ready for

them to set off by next morning's dawn; and made an apology, so it must be called, for having no chamber to offer to Hugh; for that his wife had lain in but three days before, and he was himself obliged to occupy a spare bed.

"The nearest public-house," said he to Hugh, "is a mile and a half off; and you would not find it by night: but we are threshing wheat, and there is good straw in the barn."

Hugh answered in acceptance of this lodging, and Bryan declared that he would spend the remainder of the night with him in the barn.

Moylan fastened the door of the barn within-side.

"I am sorry on your account, Bryan," said he, looking around: then added, smiling. "I have slept with you in a barn before now,—in your first journey to England."

"What is this," Bryan answered, "to a priest's lying down on the pallet of a dying man, that he may bring his ear near enough to catch his last feeble penitential sounds; or that they may not be overheard by others in the same chamber of the hospital or prison? I have shrunk from that service; I will not complain of the alternative I have chosen."

Burying themselves in the wheat straw, and taking some corn sacks for coverlids, extinguishing the rush-light in the lantern, they composed themselves to sleep.

About two hours after midnight, Bryan was awakened by a rustling among the straw, at the other side of the barn: he thought it might be some animal that had crept in at the little door or portal usually made at the end of such a building. The noise ceased for a minute, and a deep sigh announced a human being. The rustling noise began again, and continued till the person who caused it had crawled through the loose straw to the floor of the barn. Bryan heard the hands of some one pushing against the sheaves in the other division of the barn. Still he waited, forbearing to awaken his companion.

This was done, however, by a low, but gasping and discordant, female voice, that sung a mournful air to words in the Irish language. Bryan lay within reach of Moylan, so as to be able to touch his shoulder to engage him to silence. The sense of the words was unknown to

Bryan, but the manner of singing and the state of the songstress excited powerfully both compassion and curiosity. The woman appeared partly deranged.

This was more plainly to be inferred when the female wanderer began her soliloquy, in wild and incoherent sort, of Sassenachs, and fights, and wounds, and death. She became silent for a few minutes; then said, with broken and hysteric sobs:—

"There! that does good to my heart! Arthur, my jewel, I am coming!"

A horrid suspicion flashed through the minds of the two witnesses.

"Woman, what have you done?" cried Hugh, rising up and advancing towards the place from which the song and the sobs had proceeded. O'Meara also arose, and throwing open the wide doors of the barn, allowed the broad rays of the full-moon to stream in upon the object of their inquiry.

"And is it your own sweet self, my soul?" faintly exclaimed a form wrapped up in tattered clothes, and which Bryan, with difficulty, recognized as that of the old beggar-woman, Nora O'Sullivan, who had related to him her sad story at the gate of the barracks.

"And is it your own sweet self come to help the old widowed wanderer? Praised be God and the Blessed Virgin, the old woman's time is come. Do you know, honey, I thought I was never to die at all at all. But I'll find the way out of it now; only let the other man call a priest, while I tell ye something."

"But mother," exclaimed Bryan, "you are in no danger of dying, that you need send for a priest at this time of night."

"Danger is it you say?" cried the old woman: "and faith, the greatest danger would be that I'd live. But do as I bid ye, jewel; for I tell ye that I shall escape to Arthur before morning. Had not I the fever in me when I crawled in here yesterday; and have I not hung here ever since without ever a soul coming to cut me down and bury me?"

Bryan motioned to Hugh Moylan to do as she desired; although he saw no reason to believe that her end was as near as she imagined.

"Bless your sweet face!" exclaimed old Nora; "and isn't it the fever that makes me talk so; and didn't I catch it from Kitty Burne, that died in my own arms three days ago? And arrah, faith, I bless God for it; because now I'll go and see my own Arthur in his fine new uniform that he had from the Frinch gineral."

Seeing that her brain was evidently affected, and that her apparent strength might be the effect of excitement, Bryan left her and returned to the farm-house, to procure such assistance as might be needed. He was absent some while, as he was fearful of suddenly arousing the family, in the dangerous state in which he had heard that the mistress lay. A farm servant and a female returned with him to the barn, bearing a light and such warm sustenance as they thought might be of service. The appearance of the poor wanderer had, however, undergone a marked change during our hero's short absence. All previous excitement seemed to have subsided, and to have left the greatest exhaustion behind. She refused to take the food that was offered her; faintly murmuring,—

"Would ye keep me alive? But it's too late,—thank God it's too late."

She motioned to Bryan to approach nearer to her. He did so.

"Closer," she softly said; "I haven't the breath to talk as I did before the Sassenachs tied the rope round my neck. But I told you that I had something to say to you to reward your kindness. I liked you from the first; and when I saw you at night in the old abbey,—aye! niver start, jewel; I saw you: and I liked you all the better for being a pathriot. But I must say my say, for don't ye see the pain that's stopping my breath?"

"Never mind me, Nora," exclaimed Bryan; "lie at rest, and think of the priest that's coming to you."

"And shan't I do a good work before I die?" replied the old woman. "The priest will absolve me all the easier. But listen to me, jewel: you'll come to your own again, in God's good time. Isn't there an ould prophecy all about it? and what's an ould woman good for but to remember such things? And by the powers, I've niver forgotten it."

She fell back exhausted, on her straw; but after a few moments, she motioned to those around to lift her up;

and looking at Bryan she half-chanted and half-muttered the following lines :—

> "The Sassenach shall yield to O'Meara again,
> What he'd niver a bit of a right to retain ;
> But the Sassenach still o'er O'Meara shall reign."

"Och, hone! och, hone!" continued the old woman. "But the pain and the fainting will niver let me make an end. But be sure, darling, that Westbury 's your own by right, whenever ye can get it; though I don't like the last line of the prophecy. But will the priest niver come? Och, hone!"

She lay back on the straw; faintly murmuring forth, from time to time, words, in which prayers to Heaven for herself, for O'Meara, and for the arrival of the priest, appeared to be blended with addresses to her own murdered son and his broken-hearted father. No assistance could be given her, further than by pouring a few drops of cordial into her mouth; and it was now evident that she had not misjudged her state when she declared her end to be so near.

In little more than two hours, Hugh Moylan returned, conducting an aged priest.

"Kneel around, my children," said he to those who were present. "Your prayers may be heard for her, and the sight will edify you."

The holy man drew near to the sufferer. The powers of nature were exhausted. She could not speak. But when the priest held forth the crucifix, she evinced her consciousness by kissing, with fervour, the feet of the image of the Redeemer. The words of absolution, *in articulo mortis*, were recited; and the poor old wanderer lay apparently lifeless. Suddenly, she started up, and exclaiming, "Arthur, I come!" gazed wildly around for a few minutes. Then, extending her withered hands towards Bryan, she added,

"That is the O'Meara! that is the true master of Westbury!"

She fell heavily upon the straw; and in a few moments expired.

The steers were selected by Hugh Moylan; and, on the following day, our hero returned, with him and them, to Lea Hall.

CHAPTER XXVII.

As Bryan O'Meara and Hugh Moylan returned from their expedition with the purchased cattle, Mark met them, and exclaimed,—

"Mr. Larkin has been waiting for you this half-hour, Bryan, in the house. I will help Hugh with the steers."

Bryan found his friend sitting in the parlour with Tobin.

"I am glad to see you, Bryan," said the latter. "Is all right?"

"Hugh will tell you a mournful story, that concerns us as Christians; but," he added with a subdued smile, "not as farmers. The steers are safe in the yard."

"I will go and see them, and hear the story from Hugh. Mr. Larkin wants to see you on business, he said; and as I knew you would be at home before dark, I prevailed on him to stay."

"What is your melancholy story, O'Meara?" said Mr. Larkin, when they were alone; "let us have that first: it will suit 'the gloomy habit of my soul,' as you quote from Zanga, when you are in a reproving mood."

Bryan related the tale of the victim of Saxon cruelty. We need not record in what manner Larkin was affected by the recital: his character vouches for him that he heard it with heartfelt compassion: but Bryan was surprised to hear him express a strong indignation of English misrule.

"Maurice told me," he thought within himself, "that his *father* approved of his enrolment at the monastery: he did not tell me that his *brother* disapproved of it."

Then, to try the justice of his own surmise, he said,—

"I think, Larkin, that when our clergy exhort us to patience under oppression, it cannot be but that they talk ironically."

"The gravity of the evil might suggest such an interpretation, O'Meara; but I believe they advise what they think best for all the people, under present circumstances, and with reference to future hopes."

"That reply is almost jesuitical, Larkin; but I respect your situation too much to venture further."

This talk was held while Bryan untied his brogues and put on his shoes: the brogues were carried away by Rosa.

"How do you like your teacher, Bryan?" asked Larkin.

"A strange contradiction that man," said Bryan; "for he is a most peremptory commander, and a most obliging friend."

"I see no inconsistency in that: how would you like him for a neighbour?"

"What do you mean?"

"Our solicitor tells me that the Lea farm and the dale are to be sold. Bellamy's lease falls in at Lady-day, and the proprietor wants a sum of money for some family purpose. They ask £2,500 for it, but will, of course, take less: this is about your affair."

Bryan started on his feet, and took some turns in the room: at length he said, as to himself:—

"Aye, and build the Tower of Albert, close to the cabin of my birth, and renounce England for ever."

"Are you mad?" said Larkin: "sit down, and tell me what you mean by the Tower of Albert."

Bryan sat down and gave a full relation of his visit to the domain of his ancestors. Larkin was much moved; but taking him kindly by the hand, was turned from what he intended to say, and cried out,—

"My poor friend, how hard your hands are!"

"Do not be so piteous, Larkin. In France, I met with a very lively little boy, without shoes; and when I asked him how he could run about *sans semelles* (without soles), '*Le bon Dieu m'en a fait, monsieur*' (God makes them for me), said he, smiling, and touching the sole of his foot."

"Well. I see it is superfluous to pity you. Now, then, for the estate in question;—it is seventy English acres, with a farm-house, and ten cabins."

"The land is worked out," said Bryan; "for Bellamy knew that his term was drawing to a close. The farm-house is a poor one, and dilapidated; the cabins—I

would cut off my right hand rather than destroy any one of them—would be a great incumbrance."

"I see you mean to be a purchaser," said Larkin, "by your crying down the object:—it is not for nothing that you have lived with a farmer."

"Nay, surely I am qualified to judge, Larkin, for I have been at work on the land. I ploughed up his potatoes."

"You, O'Meara?"

"Yes: Hugh walked behind me while I was between the stilts."

"You are *on* them now, methinks."

"No, I talk sober prose: and I helped to lead his beans, and we were invited into the house to drink."

"Very favourable opportunities for forming a judgment," said Larkin, with a smile; "such as are enjoyed by very few purchasers of landed property."

"I can consult my grandfather and Conolly," said Bryan, full of his project, and failing to observe on this friendly sarcasm.

"They will no doubt confirm your opinion,—in itself very probable in such a case: but the value of the land, whatever be its condition, is another matter: this you can refer to Mr. Tobin."

Bryan mused.

"He may wish me to be a neighbour, or he may not," he said; "in either case he may be biassed."

"Then employ a surveyor."

"Desire your solicitor to find one, and to treat for me with the agent of the estate. I offer two thousand at a venture, to be paid on signing the conveyance. I need not appear till the bargain is concluded."

After another hour's talk, which we will not detail, but beg of the reader to believe it to have been gratifying to the heart and honourable to the understanding of each of these young men, Larkin said,—

"I must wish you good night; but I have still a matter of business for you. When I asked Father Harding's leave to go to see you, he gave it to me with some words concerning you that I do not repeat, adding, 'Tell him I want some money.'—I presume you understand the message."

Bryan replied,—

"When I had the pleasure of passing the evening at your house, I requested Father Harding to be my almoner. I am glad he does not like sinecures. I will go to my room and fetch you a five-pound note."

Bryan accompanied his friend on his homeward walk. They came to the monumental slab, the bridge over the brook, and looked down on the torrent and the dale, and on the cabins scattered on the slope at their right hand, in which the rushlights glimmered.

"The children and many of the men are in bed," said Bryan; "the women are busy in dressing flax and spinning. See, there,—my mother's cabin: the light is carried backwards; my poor old grandfather is going to his night's rest."

"How happy will it be for these poor people to have you for their master, my dear O'Meara," said Larkin.

"I must, and will be the purchaser!" Bryan cried. "Come on, Larkin,—you will take cold."

Adown the slope, and through the town, they reached the priest's house.

"Will you not walk in, O'Meara, and see Father Harding?"

"Not now; it is too late. Present my duty to his reverence."

"And your bank-note: his thanks you wish to escape."

We translate, for the amusement of the humane, the reverie of our hero as he trod back his steps alone.

"Let me see," he soliloquised. "Forty acres divided into four fields, by fences bisecting each other at right angles; the brook flowing in front of the house in a field of pasture. Their potatoe grounds are exhausted, and hardly produce a crop. I will divide the field next the road into ten portions: by digging deep, they will come to a fresh and fertile mould,—for the plough only scratches the land. I will buy a cow for every one of them: they will be glad to pay for joist what is paid by my mother and by Conolly. I will cultivate with the spade all my arable; not a horse will I keep. I am sure it is an economical plan on a small farm. The north side of the dale shall be laid down with clover and grass seeds: but they shall still have the land for flax. How beautiful

the dale will be! Let who will despise the cabins; the Tower of Albert shall answer for them and protect them."

Thus musing, he came again to the dale. The light was still burning in his mother's cabin: he called her and his aunt to the door, that he might not disturb the old man,—hastily imparted to them the events of the preceding and present day, and his project of becoming the owner of Lea farm. With a joyful and affectionate kiss to both, he left them.

"It is a castle in the air," said he; "but it rests on solid ground."

The winter rolled on:—the treaty for the purchase was concluded; the price being, as usual, something between the sum first demanded and that first offered. Extreme was the rejoicing of the dwellers of the dale, when they found, at Lady-day, that one of themselves—one whom they already loved and respected, was now to be their landlord. They entered cordially into all his plans, for all were for their benefit. His spade husbandry gave work to all of them who wanted it.

Bryan said to John Conolly,—

"Come and live with me as my friend and fellow-labourer: I will keep one room of the farm-house and the chamber over it for my own use: you shall have the kitchen, and room over it, for yourself and your wife, and the back room for Walter. You shall both of you be free to take work elsewhere, when I have none for you. I can be my own shepherd; but it will be a pleasure to me to have the help of my kind and gentle Walter."

"My dear Bryan," said John, "how happy we will be to live with you, and serve you."

Tobin said, "I am very sorry to part from you, Mr. O'Meara. I am much obliged to you for your conduct while with me."

"I thank you most heartily, Mr. Tobin, for your behaviour to me and for all that I have learned."

"But I think," said Tobin, "I can be of use to you in buying your first sheep: and, if you will allow me, I will put in your spring corn:—it shall be no expense to you but the seed. I wish to make a little return for the favour you have done me."

Mr. Tobin took a courteous, Petronilla a civil leave of him. He made his bow as before.

The next morning, the aged Lawrence, assisted by his grandson, laid the foundation-stone of the new Tower of Albert. It was eighteen feet square, placed at the distance of four feet from the cabin, on its eastern side. This space between it and the cabin was filled by the staircase, which retired four feet within each corner of the western side. The door and the window of the ground floor, were to the south; this room was intended as a sort of parlour: the room on the first floor, with its window to the north, was to be a chamber for his mother, and for his aunt, hereafter; at present, it was necessary for the latter of them to sleep near his grandfather: the second floor, with its window to the east, was to be his own sleeping room. The room on the third floor had a circular window on each side of the space occupied by the stairs. These two windows looked over Connaught; the other three windows regarded each its province.

The dwellers of the dale, now tenants of Bryan, had, at his request, removed the fences and levelled the surface of their gardens into a uniform field: he took them to their ten new allotments of potatoe ground, and saw them joyfully begin their labours. The plot for the use of his own cabin lay by the side of the others,—no fence separated them. That night, Bryan slept in his own farm-house. He had passed his day in digging with the rest, and had taken his meals with his own happy family. He slept well. He awoke not till nearly the hour of breakfast the next morning. On reaching the door of his grandfather's cabin, he was surprised to perceive that the cabin of John Conolly had entirely disappeared. He and Walter were at work on the ground—its former site.

"What is become of your house, John?" cried Bryan.

"The timber and door are under the hedge in the lane," answered Conolly; "and sure Walter and I are digging the mud of the walls and the thatch into the ground, to make it level like the rest."

"What do you mean?"

"We live with you now; so the cabin was not wanted at all, at all; and we were afraid, as long as it stood

there, we might be sent back to it; and we would not leave you to live in a palace."

"And so you really have taken on yourselves to pull down one of my houses?"

"Oh, it was a crazy, ricketty ould place; the thatch had been on it these thirty years, and was rotten entirely: it will make good manure."

"How did you know I should not want to let it to some one else?"

"Because there are only ten lots of potatoe ground; and what is a cabin without a potatoe ground? The land it stood upon will be worth more to you than it, alone by itself."

Bryan could not help smiling at this truly Irish proof of attachment.

At this period, famine stalked through the land. The evil had been foreseen; for the crop, on which alone the poor of this land depend for food, had lamentably failed. The pangs of hunger, the debility caused by inanition, the disorders brought on by unwholesome food, these cried to man for mercy, and to heaven for vengeance on those who had robbed the poor of one-tenth of their sustenance. The whole misery of the last five weeks preceding the aid of the new potatoe crop,—the starvation inflicted during this tenth of the year, must be charged to the account of the tithe. They who fell during this time must be regarded as murdered by its collectors.

Bryan had provided a large store of oatmeal: his mother and aunt busied themselves in preparing the messes of many reduced to such a state of faintness, as to be incapable even of this effort. Those under his immediate protection had been guarded against the scourge of famine: these benevolent women visited with relief the villages and hamlets around, and were blessed as the guardian angels of their neighbourhood.

The province of Connaught was more particularly afflicted. To a bishop in this province, Bryan had remitted two hundred pounds; stating that he was enabled to do this by means of a friend in England. The bishop wrote to him a letter of thanks: "You will have preserved, during forty days, twelve hundred of your fellow Christians from perishing by hunger," said the prelate.

The calculation was made at the rate of a penny a day for each person. How sweet were the repasts that Bryan shared with his dear and approving relatives in their cabin! How refreshing his sleep when he retired to his chamber at his farm-house! How cheerful were his labours! How content was he, that, spite of his wealth, he had persevered in a life of poverty!

CHAPTER XXVIII.

But pious, soothing, and cheerful as were the feelings of Bryan O'Meara, his thoughts frequently recurred to his family property at Westbury: this, indeed, was evinced by his having built his farm-house on the model of the old tower of Albert, Perhaps this feeling was a defect in his otherwise almost perfect character. Nor can we disguise, that the prophetic rhymes of old Nora O'Sullivan at times recurred to his memory:—we will not say to his *mind*, for had such been the case, a single effort of that well-tutored mind would have immediately dispelled the silly allusion. But, be that as it may, complicated feelings of family pride, self-chastisement, and curiosity, now impelled him to take a step which, trifling as it appeared to be, was not without its consequences upon his future fate.

While improving his newly-purchased acres, he had dealt with a neighbouring nurseryman of the name of Vial, who was also largely employed by the wealthy owner of Westbury. This man happened to mention one day to our hero, that having received a large order from Squire James, he was about to send over a lot of men to plant for some days in the park. It immediately occurred to Bryan to assume the garb of a labourer (not very different from that of a small farmer), and to pass one week in improving, as such, his lost inheritance, and in becoming thoroughly acquainted with it. The unsettled state of Ireland rendered the owners of confiscated property so suspicious of the pretensions of the peasantry and of the

former proprietors, that the nurseryman could with difficulty be brought to assent to the proposal, so fearful was he lest it should become a cause of offence to an excellent customer. O'Meara, however, convinced him of the peacefulness of his intentions, and of the impossibility of his being known or thought of by Mr. James: and the scheme was, at length, assented to as safe and harmless.

On the first Monday in the month of December, early, that is, before sunrise, and a thick fog rendering the mornings still more obscure at this hour, Bryan stood on the left bank of the Shannon. The ferry-boat was indistinctly seen, but the splashing of a pole in the water, told that his summons had been heard. Voices from behind indicated that others desired to cross the river with him; and as the prow of the boat touched the shore, two men rushed into it before him, impelled by the force given to their bodies in running to save their passage; Bryan stepped in, and bade good morning to the other two, whom he recognized as sons of a neighbour named Sawley. They excused their uncivil haste, on the plea that they feared the boat would push off without them, and that to wait its return would have made them too late for their appointment.

"And where are ye going this fine morning?" asked Daly. "If the fog was the steam of whiskey, it would make a man drunk in five minutes."

"No matter for that," replied the elder of the brothers; "we two are going to Westbury, to work for Mr. Vial; he has had a large order for planting."

"It is fine open weather for that," observed Daly. "And you, Master Bryan O'Meara?"

"I will tell you when I return, friend Daly."

They landed, and while they walked towards the nursery-ground, Bryan told the brothers of the plan he had arranged with Vial, for passing a labourer's week at the domain of his forefathers.

"We will take possession of it for you," said the younger, "and then we will all be in our places again. Our father is as proud of ould Hippolyte, that stood by the three O'Mearas at the Boyne, as if he had been the Gineral of the French army, let be only a common soldier."

"But what do you mean, master?" inquired Benedict; "tell us what we will have to do for you."

"Nothing, but to keep my counsel; to take no more notice of me than as of a neighbour, and to call me John Bryan. I need not say, that your being of the party will make my scheme still more interesting to me."

Hardly could he persuade them of his peaceable intention, ere they arrived at the gardener's house. Passing by half-a-dozen carts laden with young fir-trees and larches, they were within ear-shot of the foreman. He cried to them, "You might have come soon enough to fill your own carts; these two Connaught men have been here this half-hour."

"We had a long way to come, Robert," Eustace Sawley replied.

"Then you ought to have set out the sooner; let us be off, and lose no more time."

The rising of the sun, and the gradual dispersion of the mist, cheered their slow progress through a wintry landscape, by leafless trees and hedges. Again Bryan stood where he had viewed his lost patrimony in company with Moylan. They all turned in at the gate of the park, an hour before mid-day. The lord of the domain met them. "The weather is beautiful for the time of the year," said he, as he returned the civility of their doffed hats by slightly touching his own.

He was a young man of mild bearing and pleasing countenance, and Bryan regarded the ursurper without envy or resentment.

"Take these loads to the tower," said he to the foreman; "the park-keeper will shew you the ground prepared for planting."

Bryan heard the command with some contentment, and led the way with his cart along the road winding up the steep ascent.

"The day is half gone," grumbled the park-keeper or woodman to the foreman.

"Days are short now; would you plant trees at Midsummer?"

"You might have pushed on a little faster."

"Aye, but the roads are in bad condition."

"So are Mr. Vial's cattle."

"Send your master's coach-horses for the next turn."

By the direction of the forester, the carts were now drawn along the trenched land, and the bundles of young trees taken out and dropped at intervals. Three lads came at the woodman's call, and were entrusted to take back the carts to Vial's.

"And now, men, come to dinner."

To the unsophisticated appetite of Bryan's companions, this was a promise of unqualified delight; he mused what it might mean. They passed into the ground-floor room of the tower; an old woman was in the act of placing on the board a huge brown dish, whereon smoked a piece of boiled beef.

"We have a good many to feed at this time," observed the woodman, "so there has been a cow killed; it is rather tough meat; but my wife is a Frenchwoman, and can make what she calls a *bully*."

"And a *bouillon* too, Fred," rejoined the woman; "the men shall have some to comfort them before they go out in the morning; nothing like a *bon bouillon*," pouring out at the same time, from a black pot, the subject of her praise,—the carrot and onion floating invitingly on its surface.

"*Etes-vous Française, Madame?*" said Bryan.

The woman stared at him.

"*Oui, Monsieur;* but where could you learn French?"

"I went with a gentleman on a tour, and picked up a little of it."

Vial's foreman and his two Connaught labourers had placed themselves on a bench at one side of the table.

"Sit down, young men," said the dame, looking complacently at the two Sawleys and Bryan.

He took his seat next to her, and with a wooden ladle, served out the soup on the platter reached out to him on either hand.

"You learned your good manners in France," said the woman.

"It must have been there," said Eustace Sawley, humouring the intention of Bryan; "to be sure, John has been brought up in England; but I am not for thinking he learned his good manners there; they are not civil to the Irish, any how."

They returned to their labour. An old man began by laying the young trees in the rows, while the six, divided into three pairs, went on with the planting; one of each pair digging the hole, the other inserting and covering the root. The two Sawleys bore the spade for the two Connaught men, and Bryan for Robert; precedence being thus given to the older labourers on this scene.

Hardly had they thus arranged their proceeding, when two gentlemen rode up. One of them was the lord of the domain; in the other, Bryan recognized Lord John Boyne, whom, sixteen months before, he had met at Denham. They were attended by two grooms; four greyhounds, in couples, followed.

"Where shall we be most likely to find?" said Mr. James to his woodman.

"I think, your honour, on farmer Brown's high close."

"We will try it." Then to Robert he added, "Can you lend me two of your men to walk with us, and make a longer line?"

"It is hindering work, your honour; but your honour has a right to please yourself."

"Only for one course with each of these couples,—an hour or so."

"Here, then," cried Robert, "you two fustian jackets, go along with their honours," and thus Bryan, for this time, escaped the imminent peril of a discovery.

Robert asked the woodman on the following evening, "What does your master say to the tower that young O'Meara has built on the other side of the water?"

"I went up to our leads," said the woodman, "along with his honour when he first went to look at it. 'I am heartily glad he is rich enough to do it, said he; 'I cannot give him back this tower, but I wish him all happiness in his own.' But he looked very thoughtful: then he said, turning suddenly to me, 'They are relations of yours, Fred, these O'Mearas, are they not?' 'My sister married Laurence O'Meara, your honour,' says I: 'the father of him that died in England.' 'Aye, I know,' says he. 'Do you ever see any of the family?' 'Albert, my nephew'—His honour cried out, 'They keep up the old Christian names, then?' 'Yes, your honour,' said I; 'but, as I was going to tell your honour, Albert, my

nephew, came here for work when he was a lad, just to see the place, he said; but that was five-and-twenty years ago.' 'They are not obliged to work now,' said his honour, 'they have no need.' 'I have not seen any of them since then, your honour,' I said."

Bryan had been instructed by his grandfather to inquire after his brother-in-law, and he now found himself in the presence of his great-uncle. By a look to the Sawleys, he made them preserve their features from betraying consciousness.

Frederick, having finished his report of his colloquy on the tower with his lord, now asked Robert, "I suppose old Larry is dead? He was older than my sister; she was older than me. If he is alive, he must be more than fourscore."

"He is," said Bryan, interposing; "we know more of him than Robert, I and the two young men there, for we live in cabins on his land."

"I thought the young man had bought the land," said Robert.

"He did," Bryan replied; "but he says it belongs to his grandfather for his life."

"I know the cabins," said the woodman. "I wished to see my sister, who had been married when I was in Canada, where I found my French wife. I have not seen much of my brother-in-law: working people have no time for visiting. And what sort of a boy is the young one?"

Robert here interposed in his turn, Bryan willingly giving way,—"A strange fellow," he said: "he lives and works like his own cotters, and yet is making fishponds, and shrubberies, and plantations; he has been a good customer to our master."

"My brother and I," said Eustace, "are descended from Hippolyte, the old comrade and servant of the O'Mearas, that was with Albert when he died in this tower, and our families have been neighbours and friends ever since."

"Well," rejoined the woodman, "you three will sleep in the room where old Albert died. Do you think you will see his ghost?"

"I wish we may!" cried Bryan.

"Come to your supper first," said the old woman.

The supper was silent, and followed by a drowsy interchange of questions and answers on points that obviously concerned the company. The present lord of Westbury had come to reside on his property about two years before, and was beginning to plant trees to replace what had been cut down; in particular, he had taken a fancy to the tower, and willed that it should be "bosomed high in tufted trees." The woodman's sons and grandsons were employed in grubbing up roots and stumps of oaks, that had been left in the slope before it; these oaks were to be restored as fast as the growth of that timber would permit; and on either hand, on the brow of the hill, a grove was to be formed. The new building included a dairy, cellar, larder, and even the peat-stack, that it might not protrude itself on the view.

"And they will not let me keep a pig," said the mistress.

Frederick Logan, that was his name, took up a lantern, and led the way up the winding stone staircase. Arrived at the second floor, he introduced Robert and the Connaught men into the chamber; Bryan and the Sawleys waited on the steps till their turn came. They were ushered into the room of the uppermost story.

"I have taken away the old bedstead to the first floor," he said, "for me and my wife." This was a drawback on Bryan's contentment. "Here, untie the sheaves, and spread the straw," he continued, "and take every man his blanket." They did so. "You do not want a light to undress?" he asked.

"Troth, we will be cold enough with our clothes on," said Eustace.

"No, you will not, after a little while; and you have had plenty of meat and drink to warm you. Good night. Tell us of the ghost to-morrow."

Bryan's education and admission into high society had so far raised him to an equality with Mr. James and those of his rank, that he might be deemed guilty of impertinent intrusion, while doing what, in the poor cotter Albert, his father, was an act of simple and natural curiosity. This thought had not occurred to Bryan, till after he had seen the person and heard the voice of Mr.

James; but it now operated powerfully, and made him determine to reveal himself to no one.

A suspicion of this motive may be supposed to have entered the mind of Benedict Sawley, for he said, "You never met his honour, Squire James, in company, did you?"

"No, Ben; but I have met that young lord that you and your brother went with on the coursing match; and had I been ordered to go to—"

"Whew!" cried Eustace, "then we would all three of us have been invited to dine at the great house; his honour could have done no less to his young lord's friend, and the friends of his friend. Pity you were not with us!"

A little before midnight, Bryan was awakened by the sound of a scratching on the floor; and a slight rustling of the straw in the two other corners of the room indicated that his companions were awake also. A figure, clothed in white, stood upright in the centre of the room. The clock of the house struck twelve. During this tedious and monotonous repetition of sound, the figure pointed towards the quarter whence it came. An ill-defined, and apparently headless, human form moved noiselessly to and fro; then stood still, and waved its right hand, first towards Bryan, then to each of the brothers, in silence and moonlight.

"A ghost never speaks till he is spoken to," said Bryan: "who are you?"

"I am Albert," a gruff, and evidently counterfeited, voice replied: "my grandson's grandson, welcome! sons of the worthy Hippolyte, welcome!"

The two brothers, either not afraid, or acting as if they were not, now proposed each his question,—"Where do you come from?"

"The Boyne."

"How did you get in here?"

The figure pointed to the opened window.

"A ghost would have come in at a window without opening it," said Bryan, rising from his couch. The figure moved to the door. "I will let you go that way," said Bryan, seizing him, "in return for your welcome, and not by the way you came; but I will first know who you are?"

The figure betrayed his humanity by a good-humoured

laugh, and gave himself up to his three captors. Benedict and Eustace each held an arm, while Bryan took hold of the collar of his shirt, so put on as to surmount the head, and give a decapitated form to the body of one of the woodman's grandsons, a lad of fifteen years of age.

"Is this your own fun," Bryan asked, "or did any one put you upon it?"

"My grandfather: to punish you for not telling him who you are."

"And who *did* tell him?"

"The porter, that came with you to this tower a year ago, and knew you again so soon as he saw you."

"I had forgotten that any one here had seen me. Well, Fred, must I break your neck by throwing you out of the window, or lay you in the Red Sea, or will you lay yourself?"

"O, it is all over now; I want to go to sleep as well as yourselves. Shut the window; and if you do not think that enough to keep me out, draw the thong of your door-latch inwards."

"Where is your grandfather?"

"He will go to bed now, and I will go to sleep again by the kitchen fire," he said. "We will all meet again in the morning."

Each retired to his former place.

"I cannot but blame this trifling with an awful subject, the state of departed souls," said Bryan, next morning to the woodman; "and you did not prove your respect for the O'Mearas, by making your grandson personate Albert of the tower last night."

"You may be offended, nephew," replied Frederick Logan, "and so am I. Why did you come to my house under a sham name?"

"Though John Bryan is really my name," replied our hero, "I own that I concealed that by which I might have been known to you. But I did not know who you were till you told me."

"So much for that, then," replied Logan. "As for the ghost, you wished to see him."

"I did," said Bryan, "but mine was a solemn, pious thought; a desire of counsel and comfort; not the farce of a haunted tower."

"The young man is right, Fred, entirely," said the old woman: "it is very irreverent to pretend to bring the souls of the just from their place of rest, to play tricks on earth. But run up stairs, Mr. Bryan, and call the other men. I must not wake that poor boy," she said, pointing to the midnight masker, who was now fast asleep in a corner of the kitchen. "But you must have your breakfasts, for it will soon be day."

CHAPTER XXIX.

"I HAVE considered, aunt," said Bryan O'Meara to the wife of Frederick Logan, the woodman, on the morning after his disturbed sleep in the haunted tower of Westbury, "I have considered that if I retreat now, Mr. James will be as much offended, if informed of my having been here, as he will be by finding me here; in this case I may explain it to him."

"Inform!" cried Logan, "who is to inform? Robert will not, for fear of trouble to his master Vial; the porter will not, for fear of being blamed for shewing you the tower; and as to any one else on the domain, do you think they will not take part with the old family?"

Bryan was persuaded. The labour of the day proceeded without let or hindrance; and Bryan formed the acquaintance of many relatives. The farmer Brown, whose "high close" had been hunted in the morning, was a brother-in-law of the woodman, and consequently nearly related to himself.

Between the hour of darkness and supper, Logan said to him, "Now is your time to go to Brown's; you will be sure to find him at home; it is not half a mile; carry these two empty sacks: he lent them to me for my seed potatoes; the ghost and I sat up cutting them last night till five minutes before twelve."

Bryan bore his light load across the "High Close," and saw, at a little distance beyond it, a farm-house, sheltered from the east by three large elms; a long low

window in the southern gable, shewed that a cheerful fire blazed within; he heard the sound of a bugle breaking the stillness of the moonlight evening. He who caused this melody, and who was recognized by Bryan as a groom whom he had seen following Mr James, said to him, as he opened the little gate of the yard, "Go into the house."

The speaker was in the shade of the gable, but rose and followed him.

"I have brought," said he, "two sacks from Mr. Logan's."

"Lay them down by the window," said a middle-aged man from one corner of the chimney; "tell Logan he is welcome. Well, does he want to borrow any thing more?" he asked, for Bryan hesitated, as he turned again from depositing the sacks. The groom he had seen the day before, was at his right hand; his bugle depending from a strap, and he wore a liveried suit ill according with the place.

"Is any one here who is not of the family?" Bryan asked. "I have a message to Mrs Brown."

"If you doubt about me," said the bearer of the bugle, "I am in my father's house. I do not much like my fine clothes, but his honour would have it so, and we did not dare—"

"I dare say," interrupted an old woman seated at the other chimney corner, "it is some message from my old cousin Larry; you are one of Vial's men from Athlone?"

"I am the grandson of that Laurence."

"You—you an O'Meara!" the whole family seemed to exclaim at once, rising from their seats, and turning towards him.

"Thomas," cried the father, "you played your bugle to a fine tune, to bring back the real master; that is, if all had their right."

"Might overcomes right," replied Bryan, "and to might I submit. My message is to inquire after this family, and to beg of Mrs. Brown to talk with me of Laurence of the Boyne."

"She will be sure enough to do that," said the father; "sit down by her. But let us hear first of yourself and yours."

Bryan took the place appointed to him.

Thomas laid aside his fierce look, and his silver-banded hat, and seated himself at the right hand of Bryan, saying to him, "Do not think I am less of a true Irishman than the others."

"Why should I think so?"

"Because I am not an independent man."

"Nor is your father; I wanted only to know if I was amongst my relations, and none other."

A long and friendly conversation now ensued. It drew towards its close.

"We were not turned out of our farm," said the widow, "as you were out of your land; the new owners could not do without tenants to cultivate it; and my grandfather often gave shelter and employment to the two brothers, Albert and Laurence, when the new lord was an absentee. The very evening of the funeral of Albert, Laurence asked my grandfather's consent to a marriage with his sister. 'You ought to despise me,' he said, 'as you may think I would have looked down on you, were I still the lord of this domain; your sister might expect to marry one with something more than his labour to maintain her; I have nothing but that, and the remembrance of past time.' That remembrance," continued the widow, "made Laurence to be accepted, and he went with his wife across the Shannon. We have seen but little of you since then. Albert, my father's cousin, married, as you know, a Leinster woman; but Laurence, your grandfather, came amongst us, and took to wife the sister of Logan. I hope you will find a wife here too."

The remark somewhat embarrassed Bryan, for the daughter of the farmer, a fine girl, of a suitable age, sat between her mother and elder brother; it was uttered in perfect disinterestedness however.

"You ought to marry a gentlewoman," she added; "and you have a right to expect a fortune with a wife."

"Where is the burial-place," Bryan asked, "from which Albert of the Boyne was all but excluded? I have heard that there was a family burial-place: where is it?"

The question threw a damp on all matrimonial projects, if any were entertained.

"You can shew it to him, Thomas," said Philip, the

elder brother, addressing the groom; "it is not far from the great house where you live."

"True, Phil," the father observed; "but you know how it is closed up."

Thomas mused. "I can shew him the outside of the building," he said, "and it will go hard but we will find a way into it. Come to the servants' hall to-morrow evening, and call for me."

"Cannot you call for me at the tower?" said Bryan. "I had rather not enter the great house without the knowledge of the owner."

"You will wait to be invited, cousin," said Euphemia smartly, for she had resented the abrupt turn he had given to the conversation on a topic that might ultimately have concerned herself.

"Not as an O'Meara, my gentle cousin; and therefore as an O'Meara I will not intrude. I submit to my lot; and thank Laurence of the Boyne for having allied me to this family, every one of whom will be most welcome at the Tower of the Dale."

He went forth into the moonlight, accompanied by Thomas. A bright evening star, surpassing the moon in brilliancy, seemed to respect, at a distance, its placid expanse, and to be its handmaid through the vault of heaven. A chill but not ungentle north wind had chased away all cloud and mist, and the colourless objects of the landscape were in full relief. They walked over the crisp and rustling turnip leaves; some startled sheep rose, and fled from them.

"Tom, your bugle," said Bryan.

Tom raised it to his lips and preluded. The sheep checked their flight, and stood looking at them with ears erect. The solemn notes adapted to the hymn beginning "Alma," floated on the air.

"In what are we superior to those creatures, who by instinct fulfil the law of their being," thus Bryan addressed his friend; "except that we can look up to the stars that may direct us on the sea of life, and perceive by faith the pervious gate of heaven?"

The groom took the arm of his cousin. "That door, any how, they cannot close against you, nor could they against poor Laurence of the Boyne."

"Perhaps," replied Bryan, "it was open to him because other doors were shut against him."

"You will see to-morrow night," said Thomas, "what particular door I mean."

They entered the room of the Tower. "No dogs nor servants in livery, to come in here!" cried the woodman. The groom took no notice, except by a civil nod to the old woman: then laying his hand on the shoulder of the elder of the woodman's sons, called him out to the front of the building.

On the following evening, Bryan with his friend and relative, the groom, passed in front of the great house. "They are at dinner now," said Thomas, pointing to the lights that gleamed through the curtains of three lofty windows; "they are safe till eight, and then I must be back to supper up the hunters. Lord John's groom and the stable boys would have done my work for me to-night, but the masters sometimes come and look over us, taking coffee meanwhile, and declaring they like it there better than in the drawing-room."

"What have you in that wrapper, Tom?" asked Bryan.

"You will know soon."

They passed from the main walk of the shrubbery into one more shady, retired, and neglected. Bryan's mind was full; and they trod in silence over the fallen leaves and weeds that encumbered the path: it terminated in what had been a more open space; but the tall overgrown evergreens had encroached upon it, and almost overshadowed the tomb of the O'Mearas. It was a modest building of rustic walls, with a roof projecting on the four sides; it was about twelve feet square, and of equal height.

Bryan stepped to the door. "Is it locked? have you the key?" he asked.

His companion made him observe a plate of iron bent at a right angle, and screwed on the door, and on its jamb. "This strip of iron was put on," he said, "after the funeral of Albert of the Boyne; this it was that enraged Laurence, and made him take a wife from our poor farm-house, and leave the country, where he had, till then, loved to linger in poverty."

"There is no window," said Bryan; "if there were, I

could force an entrance. Must I be content with this?" he asked, after circuiting the building. Tom unfolded the wrapper, and took out a short bar of iron, giving another at the same time to Bryan, and pointing to the pavement before the step at the entrance. Each applied his tool to the corner of one of the flags, and heaved it up, resting it on the step. A hole was seen, large enough to receive an upright human body; Tom let himself down into it; his head appeared at the level of the ground, crying out, "Follow me, bring the crowbar." He stooped and went under the step. Bryan leaped in, and joined his friend under the first flagstone of the pavement of the cemetery; this slab, too, was heaved up and rested against the door within.

"Let me be the first to enter," said Bryan.

"Sure, you have the best right, alive or dead;" his friend replied, assisting him to raise himself, and assisted in his turn by Bryan.

They stood on the floor of the cemetery in utter darkness, except that the wall was perforated in the form of a cross above the door, and the moonlight seemed rather to shrink from the aperture than to try to penetrate the gloom.

"My brother Phil and the two Logans, and I, have not been burrowing like moles for a good half of last night, that you may see no more of the inside than this," said Tom, setting himself to strike a light. A candle soon communicated its flame to two torches, one he held, himself, the other he put into the hand of Bryan.

The lurid glare shone upon three ranges or shelves of stone, on which were laid the coffins of seven generations; over each coffin, was engraved, on the edge of the shelf above it, the date of the year of the death of him or of her whom it contained: the epoch commenced with the change of the religion of the country, when the destruction and desolation of all that had, till then, been sacred, made Catholics to fear even for the bones of their forefathers. Bryan approached the coffin nearest to the wall on his left hand: he laid his finger lightly upon it; the mouldering substance had retained its form, but on his touch, it fell into dust. He started as if guilty of a sacrilegious violence;

a small circular box stood out amid the crumbling dust. Ere he could examine it, "Come this way, cousin," cried Thomas, "here are the three Alberts."

Bryan slowly obeyed, and stood before the last of his race to whom an honoured sepulture had been granted in their own cemetery. His look, seen by the flaring torch-light, betrayed so much of agitation, that his companion, gently holding him by the arm, said, "Speak, or your heart will burst."

"Here we should have ended," Bryan murmured as in soliloquy, "but for the insult done to Laurence of the Boyne. If my race has been continued solely that, "through poverty" and toil, we may obtain the blessing of the poor in spirit, then is God merciful. But may we not hope for some earthly use to our existence; some benefit to this oppressed and insulted country?" He paused: "Let not worldly thoughts enter here," he added; "let nothing intervene betwixt these relics and the awful doubt, where now are the souls that animated them." Smiting his breast, he repeated the *De profundis*.

In this pious office he was joined by his companion. "We must prepare to depart," said Bryan to him; "were free access to this place allowed me, I would come here often. I will now carry away the remembrance of what I have here seen as of a holy vision, that may impress my soul till death."

Glancing his eye downwards, he saw inscriptions; he read, while Thomas held both the torches. Time did not permit an accurate examination, and he had no materials for transcribing the names. "They are written in the book of life, let us trust," said he. Turning towards the door, he perceived, sculptured on the cornice, the words *Orate pro animabus:*—"They shall have a commemoration at Saint Cross on the anniversary of the battle of the Boyne." Thus saying, he descended into the opening, followed by Thomas: they replaced the pavement within, and, extinguishing the torches, mounted and closed up the opening of the outside also.

In the course of the following day, Bryan O'Meara observed knots of three or four persons, who came near and stood by him while at work. Some went away, others came, at intervals. They addressed some question or re-

mark to him, seemingly for the purpose of looking in his face and hearing his voice. When the day had closed and he with the other labourers was retired to the tower, Thomas, the groom, entered.

"I am come to tell you, Mr. Logan," he said, "that you will have a fine sight to-morrow; the foxhounds will throw off at the copse, hard by. John Bryan, come here with me, and I will shew you the place."

Bryan went out with him; "What have you to say to me, Tom?"

"Say? to say that there are some young fellows that want to be in mischief, and that you are the man to quiet them."

"Where are they?"

"Here, in the copse."

From fifteen to twenty young men were seen as they drew near. Bryan spoke to them. "My friends," he said, "do you want me for any service I can do you?"

"We do."

"What is it?"

"If you will be our huntsman, we will throw off to-night at the great house."

"Are you mad dogs?"

"No; true and staunch hounds."

"Reserve yourselves for the time when the whole pack shall be in full cry all over Ireland; till then, if you do but give tongue, you will be driven back to kennel like mongrel curs, spite of your good blood and spirit."

"Will you be our huntsman at the burst you talk of?"

"I, my friends! I am but a poor countryman like yourselves."

"We know what you are;—will you be our leader, as your forefathers led ours?"

"Willingly, if the necessity and the occasion shall arise, and to a happier field than the Boyne; but be it well understood, not for my own selfish purposes, but for the good of our dear country." And thus he prevailed on them to retire to their homes.

The lazy and luxurious sportsmen who composed the *field* on the following day had taken sandwiches and liqueurs at the hall, and were passing by the tower, on their way to the cover, as the workmen commenced their

mid-day meal. They all rushed to the door to view the glorious cavalcade, except old Logan and his wife, who looked at it from the oriel window, where Bryan took his station with them. Lord John Boyne rode by; his face was averted in talk with Mr. James, and Bryan was unobserved by all, save that his friend Tom saluted him by a nod and a movement of his hunting whip.

"There are but a few score trees to plant," said Robert; "I will finish the job by myself, with one of the boys to help me; and you five may go to work before the tower, with the Logans." Thus it was arranged by the foreman.

Meanwhile the copse was tried; the fox broke cover, and took to the little rivulet at the bottom of the valley, passing close by the labourers; the hounds followed the scent, and the sportsmen followed the hounds; but the slope in front of the tower was so steep that they were compelled to take the winding carriage road; in full speed however. The horse of Mr. James, impatient of this delay, strove to go by the shortest line; his rider contested with him, striving to guide him along the road. The horse swerved to the edge of it, and beyond found uneven ground, and rolled over. The horseman fell on one side of his fallen steed, his foot entangled in the stirrup. Bryan was nearest of all the workmen to the spot where this accident befell; he threw down his pickaxe, and, rushing, seized the horse's bridle. The stirrup-leather being now slackened, Mr. James, by a jirk, disengaged his foot; and rising, said to Bryan, who was holding his horse on the road, "You have saved me from being dragged down this hill, my good fellow: perhaps from having my brains dashed out."

As he was about to remount the horse, Lord John Boyne rode up to the scene of the accident, and observing our hero, exclaimed in surprise, "O'Meara! you! what *are* you doing here?"

"Labouring in my vocation, my lord; 'tis no harm for a man to labour in his vocation."

Lord John was about to reply, when Bryan added, "Take no notice of me, Lord John; that is all I desire in return for the service I have been so happy as to render."

"I will do as you desire, *now*, O'Meara; but be sure that we will find you out."

Mr. James's groom now rode up, and dismounting and giving the reins of his own horse to Bryan, assisted his master to mount. Two or three gentlemen of the field also came and made anxious inquiry concerning the mishap.

"I must go to the hall and lie on the sofa," said Mr. James; "I have had a confounded shake;—lucky he did not roll over me down the hill. My hunters have had no work this season." Thus they rode away, and Bryan heard them counsel their host to be blooded.

He resumed his pickaxe; much interest was excited, and many gratulations offered by his fellows on account of the reward he might expect.

It drew towards the close of a brumal evening; a mild but cloudy sky lowered over the labourers, and the snow fell slowly. They were near to the termination of their toil of six days. Bryan and the elder Logan were busy in clearing away a stump of old oak; the former with his pickaxe or grubber, loosening its roots, the latter with a large cutting axe separating the roots from the trunk. "He is an obstinate fellow," said Logan; "but we will have him up before Sunday any how." His son—the ghost of the preceding evening—with a spade, was shovelling away the mould; and in the course of this work chanced to pass behind his father, at the moment when his axe was lifted up for a forceful blow; its point struck and penetrated the forehead of the boy; he staggered and fell. The axe had descended; but a slight check, felt in the guidance of it, the noise of something falling, and a shriek from Bryan, alarmed the unhappy father. He turned round, and saw his son extended on the ground before him: the deadly tool had wounded the brain; a tremulous convulsive movement of the features passed away; and the whole form reposed in the sleep of death.

The horror-stricken father saw plainly what he had done. He grasped the handle of the axe once more; and was about to direct its edge on his own head. Bryan rushed to him;—seized the weapon;—threw it from him.

"You have other children, Logan, live for their sake!" he said. "Come, help me to raise up this poor boy."

They raised the body; the head drooped on the shoulder; the arms fell on either side; while the blood that had trickled down the cheek, and tinged the snow;—while the lips of the appalling gash,—all carried dismay to the heart of the unfortunate father.

His brother, and the brother of him from whom life had so lately fled, hurried to the place. The youthful grief of the latter was loud and impetuous: he threw himself on the body,—"He is not dead, father; he does not look as if he was dead; Fred, dear Frederick, why do you not speak to me?"

"Oh, he is dead; it is I that have slain him," said the father, in tones of agony; while, with a trembling hand, he drew the eyelids over the orbs now for ever closed to the light of day.

The Sawleys and the Connaught men stood mute and motionless spectators of the scene of woe. Bryan made a sign to them, and, with the respect ever inspired by the sight of death, they prepared to bear the body to the Tower, while he went before to notify the unhappy event to the aged mother.

A sheet, by way of a pall, was already thrown over the corpse; its limbs, by the care of his mother, were composed into that form suited to the grave, its receptacle ere long, and its home "till the consummation of things." A younger cousin entered, and descried the outline of a human form beneath the pall; he lifted up that part of it that concealed the face; saw the ghastly wound, and the closed eyes; then, shrinking back with terror into the embrace of his surviving cousin, sobbed and wept aloud.

"Ye will have sad news to take home with ye, my children," Logan said; "but they must be told."

The relatives of the deceased, about to depart for their village, impressed a kiss on the clay cold hand, and bade a melancholy farewell for the night. The five men returned to Athlone.

The wake was attended by many friends and neighbours from the village, who relieved each other by turns.

At midnight the carpenter brought in the roughly hewn coffin. "The worst job I ever did," said he, "by

daylight or by torchlight,—poor dear boy; so suddenly! so young! but the blow to his father is more cruel than to him."

The pall was lifted from the body, now to be laid in its narrow cell.

"His clothes must remain," said the mother, at the same time pointing to the brogues. Bryan alone was found to have sufficient nerve and firmness of hand to unlace them.

"I will never wear them," said the brother.

"After a time, Edward."

"Well, I suppose I must," he replied, with a melancholy movement of the head; "we cannot afford—"

A pocket-knife and a gun-flint were found.

"He picked up this flint but yesterday," said Edward, "while we were helping the planters."

"Will you give it to me, Edward?" said Bryan. "I will have it made into a seal, with an engraving, and wear it as a memorial of my cousin." It was resigned.

The carpenter and Bryan reverently approached the corpse, and placing beneath the shoulders their hands, with the palms upwards, gently raised it from the board whereon it lay; the knees and feet were uplifted by the father and brother; it was deposited in the coffin. The ghastly wound, the clotted hair, the stiffened limbs, the passive immoveability of him who, but a few hours before, bounded in elastic activity, and smiled in the joyous hope of the spring of human life,—above all, his insensibility to their affliction,—struck a tremor on the spirits of the beholders. "He is there; yet he feels not—he answers not!"

"Take Edward away," said the mother to Bryan, "take him to your room, and try to sleep. You have passed eight miserable hours, with this dreadful sight before you. Young folks, as you and Edward are, cannot bear up like old ones; you are not hardened to what life brings with it."

Edward was prevailed upon to follow Bryan, and dragged his heavy steps up the winding stairs, unwilling to quit the cause of his sorrow. Their senses were steeped in forgetfulness till the dawn of day arose.

The fatal accident had stupified the father at the

moment of the event; he felt not then so much his loss, as what was horrible in the manner of it; he feared then to be reproached as the murderer of his son; but he had now surmounted his desire of self-destruction, and had begun to regard himself, though wretched, yet innocent.

"You will not hate me?" he said to his wife.

"Hate you, Frederick! From my soul I pity you. The soul of our dear boy looks on you with pity. Come to me, darling Edward; help me to comfort your father."

In an affectionate embrace they mingled their tears.

"If you can forgive me," he cried, "I will try not to blame myself; it is misery enough to have lost a good, a dutiful, a loving son."

"Love me, father!" ejaculated Edward, with a meaning beyond what his words conveyed; and the parents kissed the surviving son, bending over the coffin of the slain.

All present were moved to admiration, by the effort which the mother evidently made to suppress her own grief, that she might not aggravate the grief of the father.

"It is the will of God," she said, "as much as if he had been taken from us by sickness; it is a good Providence that has seen him already fit for Heaven. After mass—I shudder to think of it, but it must be done—"

"I will accompany you," said Bryan, "and leave you before the tabernacle, in the presence of the perpetual Oblation; there you will find strength to endure this severe trial of your faith and resignation. My week of spiritual retreat has ended in a manner that will, I trust, make it bear to me the fruit of those virtues during the remainder of my life."

During their walk to the chapel of the village, he essayed, not without success, to compose the mind of the father to a state of meek suffering and holy submission.

"Do not," he said, "do not dwell on the thought that seems most to afflict you;—had you been working with my tool, and I with yours, I might have struck the fatal blow. Would you have been so unjust, so cruel as to blame me? Be just, be merciful to yourself, my uncle."

He pursued his walk homewards in lonely thought, hardly able to account to himself for the influence which

the event he had last witnessed had produced on the temper of his mind. He had become familiar with death, in the mode in which the poor are compelled to be acquainted with its circumstances, by performing those offices and exerting those efforts of benevolent care, which the rich in such cases devolve on others. He seemed to have acquired an indifference to life, held by so frail and uncertain a tenure; and a readiness to confront and defy danger in the cause he ever had at heart,—the cause of justice and his country. His visit to the cemetery, where the past generations of his family reposed, had contributed to supply him with an estimate of human life, by the silent language in which it told its shortness, its nothingness. He measured his own feelings with those of the unconscious usurper of his patrimony, and asserted his own equality with him in the rank of human beings, in the great purpose of human life. Many warm hearts had testified their affection for him. He was confirmed in his plan of life, by which he had the advantage of being one of the most numerous class, amongst whom he might distribute benefits and secure adherents; while even they of higher rank and boastful exterior, yielded homage to his virtues, his perseverance, and resignation.

CHAPTER XXX.

On the last day of the following week Bryan received a visit from Mr. James and Lord John Boyne. This was expected. Lord John had declared that his friend would find out his deliverer from the stirrup.

"I am come, Mr. O'Meara," said the former, "to express my gratitude for the important service you rendered me, and to return the visit you have made me at Westbury."

"To Westbury, sir, not to Mr. James," replied Bryan; "I could not presume so far."

"Mr. O'Meara," said Mr. James, "from the extraordinary mode adopted by you to enter on your family estate,

we must be either friends or enemies. To that estate I have succeeded, and mean to hold it; but I probably owe my life to you; and if any compromise"—

"None, sir, ought to be offered, nor will any be accepted; I was rejoiced to be able to assist you in your accident. But your right, if good for the whole, is good for every part. The fortune of war gave the estate to you; my ancestors knew their risk, and that the stake would be exacted without mercy, as in former times."

Mr. James resumed: "Tyranny and injustice are visited on succeeding generations. The descendants of the plundered and the plunderer, I regret to perceive it, cannot be friends."

"That would be well said in the House of Commons," cried Lord John; "but what would you have cared for the O'Mearas, if one of them had not been what education, and foreign travel, and good company, have made him?"

"I plead guilty, John," said Mr. James; "and can only allege in my excuse, the way of the world."

"And," Lord John continued, "and had he been an ordinary peasant, you would have sent a servant with your thanks and twenty sovereigns, and thought you had done very handsomely in setting so high a value on your life."

"Permit me, gentlemen, to reply to each of you in turn," said Bryan. "It is not for me to form an estimate of the qualifications that have procured for me the honour of a visit from Mr. James; I will observe to you, sir, however, that the more you familiarize yourself with your peasantry, the more you will find them, and make them, worthy of your notice. You, Lord John, shall not be frustrated of your benevolent suggestion: I will give the twenty sovereigns to the six men with whom I was at work at the time of the accident; any one of them, and every one of them, was as ready to help Mr. James as myself."

"No one but you came forward," Mr. James remarked.

"True, sir, they judged that the reward would be acceptable to me; but they will be much dissatisfied, if, as they will express it, you save your money, and for the very reason that they resigned the reward to me."

"They fully deserve it," said Mr. James, "for such a trait of generosity. Will you, Mr. O'Meara, take the distribution on yourself?"

"I will, sir; and will gratify them by repeating the approbation of their conduct, which you add to your your gift."

"Two of those labourers are cotters of mine, Mr. O'Meara," said Mr. James, "and I cannot allow you to take away from me the pleasure of rewarding them."

"It shall be my care, sir," replied Bryan, "that you have all the merit of the gift."

"True! but as the gift has changed hands, I cannot permit you, even indirectly, to confer a favour on any of my people."

"The Logans are my relations, Mr. James."

"That may be a reason why you should give to them your own; but not what is in some sort a prize, and a prize awarded by yourself. Besides, that family has at this time a particular claim on my kindness. I was much shocked on hearing of the dreadful calamity. I cannot alleviate their sorrow, but I may help them by a remission of rent."

"Have you seen any of the family, sir?" Bryan asked.

"I was present at the inquest; the conduct of those who were but officially concerned was honourable to our nature: after the verdict of accidental death, and the departure of the compassionate jury, the body was borne on the shoulders of the four whom you know; the afflicted family followed in procession; I attended them, as a mourner, to the gate of the park."

Mr. James endeavoured rather to restrain than make a parade of feeling; choosing short and simple phrases, and looking down, that he might not seem to expect approbation.

Bryan said, "As connected with the family, I beg leave to thank you, sir, for your humane attention, and your interest in their affairs."

"If I can do any thing to gratify you, Mr. O'Meara" —he added with a smile, and an emphasis on the words, "any thing in reason."

"I understand you, sir; I am not so unreasonable as to

expect you to resign your estate;—you know your tenure, and will not object to the law of retaliation."

"When it shall be in your power to retaliate, Mr. O'Meara, any objection on my part will be unavailing. Meantime, the report of Lord John, who met you in England, and what I now see, impels me to ask your friendship. It will be better for me to be turned out by a friend than an enemy." Again he smiled.

"Enough has been said on that last topic, Mr. James," replied Bryan; "you can, however, gratify me; and you encourage me to request that the plate of iron on the door of the cemetery of my family may be, by your order, removed; and that I may have leave to enter there."

"I know the story of that plate of iron," said Mr. James; "and I regret that the hostile mind should, at that time, have so far prevailed. The plate shall he removed, if you will agree to visit the cemetery from my house. But stay, I will make no condition; I appeal to your generosity."

"To refuse an appeal, so full of generosity on your part, Mr. James, would imply a degree of ill-will which, believe me, I have never felt in regard to you. I will do myself the honour of calling on you."

"Why not return with Lord John and me, and spend the evening with us? The carriage has two seats; and a carriage shall be at your order, if you wish to attend mass at Athlone to-morrow."

"Come, O'Meara," cried Lord John, "there is a friend of yours at Westbury, whom you have been so uncivil as not to inquire after. You remember our talk at Denham, when I confided to you my tender passion for Lady Charlotte."

"I beg leave to offer my congratulations, my lord; and to apologize for their tardiness. I hope your lady is well."

"Come and see," said Lord John.

"I shall be under the necessity of making you wait ten minutes, while I change my dress."

"We will employ that time in looking out of the windows of your observatory, if you will give us leave," said Mr. James.

Within that space of time Bryan returned to them.

habited in the mourning which the late loss of his cousin required him to wear, and which had been brought with his other "gentlemanly" clothing from England; but had not been since worn. No remark was made on his altered appearance. Mr. James placed himself on the seat of the barouche next to the horses. In far less time than Bryan had employed in conducting thither his cart of young trees, he arrived, in a new character and costume, at the park.

"You are welcome here, as my guest, Mr. O'Meara."

"You should be welcome here as mine, Mr. James," was good-humouredly interchanged between the *out* and the *in*; like the title, "your royal highness," between the Cardinal York, grandson of James II. and a son of the, *de facto*, king of the house of Hanover.

It was almost dark when they arrived, and Bryan was lighted up into a chamber on the second floor, over the drawing-room, that he might prepare for dinner. "'Tis passing strange," thought he, "yet here I am, at home!"

"Here is the key of the cemetery," said Mr. James, entering, after he had knocked at the door; "I have ordered the plate to be removed. You will have time to go there to-morrow morning, since you will not pass the day with me."

"I am an early riser by profession, Mr. James."

"Shall some one shew you the way?"

"I know it, sir."

"You have been there already then."

"I have."

"But not within it?"

"Yes, within it."

"How could that be done?"

"Pardon me, Mr. James, that is a secret."

"But why then so anxious for the removal of the iron plate?"

"I felt it to be an insult."

Mr. James retired, somewhat astounded by the high bearing of his low-born guest.

Lady Charlotte overpowered Bryan by the volubility of her expressions of surprise at all she had heard.

"The only reason," said Mrs. James, "why I do not regret you should have adopted such a mode of becoming

acquainted with this place is that it enabled you to save Mr. James's life."

"It is an hereditary mode, madam; my father and grandfather adopted it before me; the only difference being that the family was then absent from the Hall."

"Another difference, sir, you are willing to overlook; your education, and your independence."

"You must be aware, madam, that all access was as much forbidden to me as to them: and but for Mr. James's accident, I should have departed equally unknown."

"I do not wonder, sir, you should be slow in believing yourself welcome here. I hope you will have no reason to doubt it. I meant to say not only that I was grateful for the service rendered, but that it was by your means; and that we have, in consequence, the pleasure of your company."

Bryan's behaviour in the trying circumstances of a well-conducted dinner fully justified Lord John's eulogium on his manners, which had induced Mr. James to take the extraordinary measure of seeking the friendship of a rival claimant to his property. Both he and Bryan, however, perceived that they had imposed on themselves, by a romantic impulse, a task of difficult accomplishment. Bryan was absorbed in reflection on the motives to resignation, and on the political advantages to be derived from the injustice done to his family, in the then excited and threatening state of the whole of Ireland; while Mr. James could not persuade himself that the injured forgive more easily than the injurer. Besides, almost every topic of conversation was interdicted. Religion and politics—although Mr. James was no orangeman—were out of the question. Mr. James could not talk about his property or improvements for obvious reasons; Bryan knew nothing of field sports; and Mr. James felt compunctious visitings even in offering to send Bryan a present of game from time to time. Lady Charlotte, indeed, who had not been in England for a twelvemonth, made many inquiries concerning former friends; but the subject was painful to him, as the family at Denham was naturally often alluded to.

"Do you know," she said "that Mr. Walton is a

cousin of Mr. James? this estate is entailed upon him," she whispered, with her usual thoughtlessness.

"He is a coxcomb, whose relationship I have no wish to remember," replied their host.

That silence might not be proclaimed by the retreat of the ladies, Bryan began to speak of his own farm and spade husbandry, giving to his talk a tone of contentment with his moderate substitute for a large estate. Mr. James was encouraged to say, "I think of turning farmer myself, Mr. O'Meara: between the brow of the hill, where you were so obliging as to help to plant larches,"—a smile was interchanged,—"and Brown's farm, there are about two hundred acres, English."

"Very poor land," said Bryan; "exactly suited to an amateur."

"You do not think it would answer to cultivate them?"

"It would answer to the parson."

"I am the impropriator," Mr. James replied; "your family obtained a grant of the tithe on the dissolution of the monastery of ——: the monks had taken it from the parochial clergyman.

"But my family was always Catholic," said Bryan.

"In England, at the time of the Reformation," Mr. James observed, "it was not uncommon for the heads of Catholic families to turn Protestant, for the sake of a manor or other Church plunder, and to become Catholic again before death, or in the next generation; but in Ireland there was no need of such prevarication."

"So then," said Lord John, "after the monks and the O'Mearas, James has the tithe at last."

"Such being the case," said Bryan, "Mr. James may engage in his enterprise, with a hope of profit equal to the value of one-tenth of the produce."

"I will consult old Logan," said Mr. James.

"He may be your bailiff," replied Bryan, "and you will want only a barn and barton at a little distance from the tower: they will be hid by the trees."

"This is all very pretty talk for you landowners," cried Lord John, "but I am in the background; being, in truth, John Lackland. My sword has no great *apanage* in these piping times of peace,—no work; and, now that

the Tories are out, my father-in-law will not be able to make me Constable of Athlone, as he promised on my marriage. I will make interest for my troop to be quartered there, however: and Charlotte may live in lodgings, for I cannot afford an establishment. Will you come and see me, O'Meara? You can be a gentleman in ten minutes at any time, and that is more than can be said of many who pretend to be such all their lives."

"I thank you simply for the compliment, Lord John; when you are in quarters, you will be better able to judge of the prudence of your invitation."

They adjourned to the drawing-room. The politeness of Mr. and Mrs. James to Bryan was somewhat ceremonious; for their situation in regard to him forbade familiarity; and he was under the constraint imposed by the necessity of appearing to be not entirely contented with the forfeiture of his patrimony. Lord John was agreeable, but superficial; Lady Charlotte had abated of her vivacity, and seemed to be in train for acquiring good sense by longer experience.

Mr. James conducted Bryan to his chamber, as if jealous of performing the functions of master of the house, yet with a seriousness that betrayed compassion for him who was deprived of that station.

Bryan slept soundly, however, for some hours. He was awakened by a voice that said, in a subdued tone, "John Bryan O'Meara!" and, as he began to rouse himself, "do not speak above a whisper for your life."

The speaker turned the shade of a dark lantern, and was seen to be Thomas Brown, the groom; and the same moment Bryan's arms were seized by the elder brother of Thomas, and the younger of the brothers Logan, each of them armed, not indeed with that poetical and romantic weapon, the dagger, but with huge knives, equally merciful in the art of destruction.

"If you cry out," said one of them, "we will run away, but we will stab you to the heart first;—we will not be hanged for nothing."

Bryan had the presence of mind to see the force of this argument, and he whispered, as his interlocutor had done, "What mean you?"

"Traitor! informer!" Logan muttered.

"If I am such," replied Bryan, "the sooner I am dispatched the better. I speak in a whisper, for I have no wish to bring any of you into danger."

This speech procured him a hearing.

"Clear, yourself, then," said Thomas.

"Let go my arms, and turn away your knives," said Bryan; "I will neither be held nor intimidated."

The two men complied.

Bryan raised himself, and uncovering his head, looked at them sternly, as awaiting what they had to say.

"Why are you here?" Logan asked.

"Because Mr. James came to my house to invite me: because he promised to be kind to you, and more kind to your unhappy brother;—because he engaged to open the door of the burial-place."

Thomas here interposed: "You told him you had been inside of it."

"I did; he asked me; I would not tell a lie; but I would not tell how I got in."

"You told him of the meeting at the copse," said the brother of Thomas.

"He may know of it from others; but not from me, till he tears it out of my heart."

"You have sold yourself to him for a pension out of the land," rejoined the other.

"He offered me something of that kind; but I told him—all or none; that he held the land because Orange was uppermost; if the nation was uppermost, I would have it again."

The men looked at one another, as having nothing more to urge.

Bryan resumed: "Remember, I said at the copse, Thomas,—I know not if these two were there,—that if we ever made war on the Saxons, it was not to be for my petty concerns, but for the deliverance of Ireland."

"That is true, too," said Thomas. "Logan—brother, are you content?"

Each of them offered a hand to Bryan, who gave a hand to each.

"Now you have hold of me again," he said, "and you have each of you a hand at liberty with a weapon in it,—strike, if you do not trust me."

"No, O'Meara; you are a brave fellow; a villain would not bear it as you do."

They stole away so gently, that Bryan could not hear the sound of a footstep, nor of the closing door. He composed himself to sleep: and was soon dreaming of his intended visit to the cemetery.

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE sun already darted his rays from the south-east, when Bryan took the way to the cemetery. With pious awe, he opened the door that had been closed for more than a century, owing to a consciousness of injustice which avenged itself by contumely thrown on the injured—a sentiment that pervades the whole of the intercourse of England with Ireland. He looked at the vacant space by the side of Albert of the Boyne.

"Had I been assassinated this morning," he mused, "my body would, perhaps, have been permitted to rest there."

A horrible thought arose. Had Mr. James excited the jealousy and rage of the midnight intruders, that it might be quenched in the blood of a rival claimant? Impossible! the loyalty of Bryan's own mind threw the suspicion from him: yet with inconsistency natural to the human compound of reason and feeling, he resolved to put the doubt to a trial. The thought would not have occurred anywhere but in this gloomy vault; where his ancestors had been condemned to oblivion. The view of their relics gave it a force that his unsuspecting mind recoiled from in vain.

A sudden gleam of sunshine awakened two bats: they flitted and fluttered, and whirled around him, ere they bore their amphibious forms through the opened door. Our hero struck a light, and then carefully examined the successive layers of the dead. He paused before the bones of the last of the O'Mearas, who had been there interred. The dust of the coffin, which had crumbled to his touch on his former hurried visit, lay strewn around: but

his leisure now led him to observe the small circular box, of tin or iron, which that mouldering dust had revealed to his view. Uncertain what it might contain, he took it with a trembling hand, that he might examine it hereafter. He shuddered to lift it from amid the fleshless bones of his ancestor: but after spending some time in prayer and meditation, suited to the scene, he wrapped it in his handkerchief, and, closing the gate of death, returned, slowly, to the hall.

"Mr. James," said Bryan, at the breakfast table, "if I had fallen by the blow of the axe that killed that poor boy, would you have given me a place in the O'Meara cemetery?"

"I will own," replied Mr. James, "that I should not have done so; you were then entirely unknown to me."

"If I had died in the course of last night?" rejoined Bryan.

"In that case," replied Mr. James, "—a possible case certainly,—I should have complied with whatever might have been the wish of your family."

His countenance, however, betrayed some trouble; the cause whereof he thus explained.

"If you mean, Mr. O'Meara, to ask for the restoration of the cemetery to its original purpose, you place me in the dilemma of an ungracious refusal, or of a concession that may seem to be a mockery while every thing, but sepulture, is retained by me and withheld from you and yours. I can only say, that, while I live, every request of your family for the privilege apparently so valued by you, shall be attended to respectfully."

"I have no such meaning, Mr. James: the question was suggested solely by what I have seen this morning, and by reflection on the uncertainty of life. I am sensible to the humane and generous feeling expressed in your reply. A peasant's grave will suit a peasant—if such is to be my continued lot in life."

After a repast, that, by its serious conversational tone, seemed to lower the spirits of Lord John and Lady Charlotte, Bryan took his leave. A small, low phæton, with one horse, waited for him at the hall door. Thomas, the groom, was in attendance. Bryan mounted and laid hold of the reins; Thomas took his seat beside him.

"Well, cousin?" said Bryan; and waited to see the present temper of his companion.

"Does *he* know we are related?" Thomas asked.

"I have not told him so," Bryan replied. "But I will; for he seems inclined to favour the Logans, for my sake."

"I thought you would be ashamed of us all, now."

"You are a set of jealous-pated blockheads," said Bryan; "at least, I can answer for three of you: but how came you to know that I told him of having been in the inside of the cemetery?"

"Why, he told the mistress; and the mistress told the lady's-maid; and she told the butler; and he asked the footman, if the priest had conjured the door open; and he told it in the servants' hall. The butler is English, and the lady's-maid, too; and they, and the master and mistress, and my lord and my lady, and their two servants, are going to prayers in the library; and they have sent for the parson, as there are so many of them got together."

Eight of them," Bryan remarked.

"And where will there be a larger Protestant congregation, this day, anywhere in county Roscommon?" Thomas rejoined.

"But, Tom, my friend," said Bryan, "you seem to be ashamed of your dark-lantern visit to my room; for you avoid all mention of it."

"I am ashamed," replied the groom; "and so is my brother and Luke Logan. It behoved us all to leave you as quickly as we could, or we might have told you so at the time: but we all beg your pardon, and we think better of you than ever, and will always be true to you."

"Your truth and your good opinion are easily lost and won; but I must bear with you, such as you are. I forgive you, Thomas; and I will forgive your brother and Luke Logan, if they will come and confess their fault at Lea-dale."

Thomas wept and sobbed.

"To think what we might have done!" said he. "If you had been frightened, it would have looked like guilt, and the blow would have been struck. Thank Heaven, you had the courage—"

"I can apprehend," said Bryan, "that Mr. James may have told his lady of his intention to offer me what he

called a compromise, and that she may have talked of it to her maid, and so on, as before; but why did your wise heads suspect me of reporting the meeting at the copse?"

"I was riding out with master," replied Thomas, "and we stopped where they are planting, and master talked with old Logan about you: he asked if you were a good workman; if you lived like the other labourers, while you were at the tower; at last, he asked if you had not a great many friends here; and when he said these words, he looked towards the copse: to be sure, a pheasant *did* whirr up at the time, but I could not help thinking—"

"Please to observe, Mr. Thomas," interrupted Bryan, "that I did not meet your master till yesterday, and therefore could not have told him of the mad assembly at the copse in time for your suspicion: you might have augured differently from the flight of that bird."

"But when you came to the hall," Thomas resumed, "we thought you came on purpose to shew us that you would have no more to do with us; and would turn informer to curry favour; and so we were mad with you: and I let the two men into the house, and shewed them your room; and I was to stop your mouth with a cloth while they stabbed you: and now you may hang us, if you will, or transport us anyhow; for we left you in such a hurry, that we forgot to make you promise not to peach."

"Perhaps, I would have disputed such a demand," said Bryan, "and have bidden you trust to my honour; for you may all three rest assured that I will never mention this matter to any living soul."

"You are more merciful to us than we deserve."

"I hope the Almighty will be so to me."

Thomas pressed the arm of Bryan.

"I will be true to you till death," he said with emotion.

"My visit to the cemetery, this morning, Thomas," thus Bryan changed the topic, "was not so impressive as when I went there with you. It was not a first view. There was not the solemn torch-light; and a permitted entrance did not gratify me so much, as did the zeal of my friends, in obtaining for me an unexpected passage."

"We will fill it up, to-night," cried Thomas; "you will not want it any more. My brother and I can do that

job by ourselves; we need not ask the Logans to help us."

"Two nights following, your rest will be broken on my account, Tom," said Bryan, smiling.

"I wish you would forget last night."

"I will think of it as a proof that you love your country better than me."

"That was just what the others said, to persuade us, when we wanted to excuse ourselves as being related to you by blood."

"Were others consulted, then?"

"Yes; many of them you met at the copse: all agreed you intended to betray us."

"You ought to have summoned me to your council of war; and let me plead my own cause, free from the threat of instant death."

"You defied that threat in a way that will make us all admire your courage."

"Yes; but a very honest man might have failed in such a proof. Hear me, Thomas, and report what I say. I will not be led by them who desire me to be a leader. If I cannot judge better than they, I am not qualified to be their leader: if I can, let them trust me. I approve of none but open and generous warfare. Had I refused Mr. James's invitation (the cause of this foolish jealousy among you), the refusal would have been the same declaration of war that accompanied my acceptance. A state of war, should we unhappily be compelled to involve ourselves in such a state, does not exclude mercy, nor even an interchange of kind offices. I have saved the life of Mr. James. I have saved his house from an attack by night. I am his enemy: and he knows it."

"Holloa!" cried a gentleman, meeting them, and placing his horse so that Bryan was compelled to draw up the reins. "A pretty turn-out you have here, Mr. O'Meara."

"It is Mr. James's carriage, Colonel: he took me yesterday to Westbury, and sends me home in it."

"I presume, sir, you did not go to the house of an Irish gentleman without a pair of pistols?"

"Indeed, I took none with me; I relied on my entertainer to supply all necessaries. But what need of pistols at present?"

"Only that I would beg of you just to step out by the side of the road, and exchange a shot with me."

"Why this challenge, Colonel?"

"Because you can dine with others, and refuse to dine with me."

"I have had no opportunity of refusing."

"Then, I give you the opportunity now: I beg the favour of your company to-day at five o'clock. And if you refuse me, you will treat me as my own stupidity and negligence deserve."

"You seem to require no lesson from me, Colonel Bolton. I accept your invitation."

"Thank you, O'Meara: *au revoir.*

"You see, Thomas," said Bryan to his cousin, as they drove on, "I am a double man: a labourer's son, by birth,—a gentleman by education. But, tell my friends, I glory in being one of them; in being an example, and a sharer of the wrongs of Ireland. All that I may have acquired by education is at their service for our country's sake. And now, set me down at O'Farrel's: he has married a servant of Tobin's, where I learnt farming. I will go with them to chapel: and you may return. Remember all I have said to you."

To Rosa's astonished look, as she came forth, on hearing the carriage at the garden gate, Bryan answered,—

"Aye, Rosa, times are changed: you are a grand gardener's lady, and I ride in my phæton."

"No," replied Rosa, "times are not changed at all, for you are as kind to your friends as ever you were."

"Hear that, Tom, and report it," cried Bryan. "Rosa, this is my cousin, Thomas Bryan."

"I know him by sight," said Rosa; "but not that he was of your kin."

"I had forgotten," cried Thomas to Bryan. "What will I do with the hare and patridges that are under the seat?"

"Leave them here; Mrs. O'Farrel will give them house-room (taking a partridge for her and her husband's supper this evening), till she can send them, with this tin-box, up to the tower."

Colonel Bolton was a tall, handsome man of thirty-five

years of age. He had entered at nineteen into the army: and while quartered in Ireland, his native country, had married ten years before this time. His father, who had held an official situation in Dublin, had been dead two years; and had left him an estate near Athlone; to which he had lately retired — weary of living in quarters. Weariness of having nothing to do, had, however, impelled him to take his estate into his own hands, in the hope, too, of adding to an income somewhat too moderate for his desires. He had heard, with interest, some rumour of Bryan's history; and whenever they had chanced to meet, had been glad to converse with him, and to obtain what information he could on his present agricultural pursuits.

Colonel Bolton received Bryan with a politeness intended to make amends for his former slight, and Bryan felt that he had not wronged himself by accepting the excuse that had been offered to him. Charity had been observed, and his own estimation had not been compromised. To the mother and wife of his entertainer, he was introduced by a name as unknown to them as his person; no countervailing influence, from the consciousness of his real condition, prevented them from treating him as his manners and conversation suggested to them he was wont to be treated. The Colonel had a mind to try an experiment by means of the ladies of his family,—how far those, who were once in Bryan's company, might desire to meet him again.

His guest, when dinner was announced, politely offered his arm to the wife of the Colonel, who conducted his mother.

"I am sorry we have no one to meet you, Mr. O'Meara."

"I should be very unreasonable, Colonel, if I desired more gratification than you give me at present."

The talk was directed to English, French, Italian topics; the neighbourhood was avoided: such was the Colonel's tactics; and the perplexity of the two ladies as to who his guest could be was a source of amusement to him.

The elder lady was lively and careless; the younger

somewat precise. Both of them very well bred; though neither of them very wise, yet not wanting wisdom.

"I give you credit for talking French well, O'Meara," said the Colonel; "and I flatter myself that I am a good judge. I received many compliments on my language while in France, during one of my leaves of absence: they made me very vain. I was dancing one night at a ball with a very pretty girl; she was silent, and gazed at me for a long time, during the dance,—while we stood still, I mean. I thought she must be admiring either me or my French, or both: when, at last, she said, '*Vous avez soixante et douze boutons sur votre habit!*'"

"What a silly girl!" said the wife.

"How fine you were, William!" said the mother of the Colonel; both at the same moment.

"I infer," said Bryan, "that she thought your good French to be a matter of course. Your buttons, I presume, were a sort of breast-plate or corslet: *decus et tutamen*—not only an ornament, but a defence, too."

"Yes; they might turn a spent ball."

"The trappings of war ought to be of some avail to the personal safety of the warrior," Bryan observed, "that there may be some excuse for that absurdity of mixing its horrors and its finery."

"What mean you, O'Meara?"

"I mean, Colonel, what you, who have seen a foughten field, must be convinced of, that war is no frivolous amusement to which men may repair, decked out in lace and feathers; but a scene of slaughter and destruction, to be approached with valour, indeed, but with grave reluctance, and to be remembered with compassionate regret."

"All very fine; but would you have men regret when they conquer?"

"Not that they conquered, but that they fought: and I would have you allow also that this solemn act of national justice ought not to be disguised, as to its nature, by joyful triumph and thoughtless acclamation rung in the ears of men who had witnessed the slaughter of, it may be, fifty thousand of their fellow-men; and that the actors in such a scene ought not to have appeared in

dresses fit for the festivity of a dance, or for some happy occasion of public—"

"La, Mr. O'Meara!" said the Colonel's mother; "surely, as William is come safe back, I may say it was very glorious to conquer."

"Permit me to ask, Madam, if but one single human dead body was lying on the bridge of Athlone, would you cross the bridge?"

"Shocking! How can you think I would?"

"And if your son had been killed in an engagement?"

"I think it would have killed me, too; or made me miserable for the rest of my life. Well; I give up the point. It is a very melancholy thing, that men should kill one another; and would not be endured, if we were not used to it."

"I suppose," said Mrs. Bolton, "you would have soldiers to be dressed in mourning."

"A very good suggestion, madam; if I ever command an army, black shall be my military uniform."

Ambitious views had begun to dawn on the mind of Bryan: he thought it possible that he might be the leader of a patriotic force, when time should favour him, in his projects for the independence of Ireland. That England would be just, he had never hoped or expected. But this phrase, the meaning of which was concealed in the recesses of his heart, passed as a jest with his hearers: the Colonel observing upon it,—

"You would lose a great many boys who now enlist as privates, or become ensigns, for the pleasure of wearing gay coats. I know a fellow, who, being determined to be a soldier, lay in bed with two cockades before him, and went to the recruiting sergeant that had supplied him with the ribbons of the prettiest colours. Fool as you may think him, he was a very good soldier."

"It is necessary," Bryan replied, "to conceal from men the end of war; false reasons are given for every appeal to arms; the trappings of war dazzle their eyes; drums and trumpets astound their ears; they are hurried along they know not whither; in pursuit of they know not what; the puppits of those who manage the strings while they themselves keep out of danger; and the people pay

for glory by sacrifices of their substance, of their affections, of their best enjoyments."

"But there must be war!" exclaimed the Colonel.

"*Ma foi, je n'en vois pas la nécessité*," Bryan replied.

Two fine boys and a very pretty little girl were introduced; so their grandmother willed. Bryan soon attracted their confidence.

"Are you to be a soldier?" he asked the younger.

"Yes; I am to be Captain Bolton, and William is to be a clod-hopper."

"Harry," said his mother, "do not be saucy to farmers; your papa is one."

"Yes, but he was a soldier first."

"You are welcome to be a soldier, Harry," said William; "I am to have the estate."

"There is the evil, Colonel," observed Bryan; "the right of primogeniture."

"My boys know more of my affairs than I do myself," said Colonel Bolton. "But the world and its usages will reconcile Harry to his fate, since it must be so."

"Again I say, Colonel, *ma foi je n'en vois pas la nécessité*."

"*Nous verrons*," said Colonel Bolton.

Bryan passed his evening pleasantly, and returned home by the light of the full moon.

And now Bryan O'Meara had retired to the topmost room of his tower; and while the bright moon streamed through the unshuttered casement, and a fragrant fire of turf smouldered in the grate, he drew towards him the tin box, which his unexpected engagement with Colonel Bolton had compelled him to leave with Rose O'Farrel, who had sent it home in the course of the afternoon. The pleasure and the novelty of being again in educated society, which he had not enjoyed for so many months, had withdrawn his mind from all thoughts of the box, from the time when he had taken it from the sepulchre. The sight of it on his table, now awakened a strong feeling of curiosity, which he resolved at once to gratify; although the hour was late for one of his present agricultural habits.

The outside of the box was in no way remarkable. It

was of tin, or thin sheets of iron, about eight inches square, and not more than half that thickness. A rusty padlock fastened down the lid; and although a key was attached to it by a wire, the wards were too much decayed to be now of any use. With a chisel, Bryan easily broke the clumsy latch, and forced the rusty hinges. With increasing curiosity, he beheld a bundle of mouldy leather, tattered, and rotten to the touch. He peeled off the outside shreds, and came to a better preserved wrapper within. This also, and another, and another, of different materials, but less and less injured by time, he removed with increasing anxiety; and, at length, came to that which all these folds had so carefully inclosed.

It was a sheet of parchment, written over in those black letters which lawyers still cherish—as a proof that law is, what no one doubts it to be, a mystery. Appended to the deed was a circular box, inclosing a large seal, such as Bryan had heretofore seen attached to ancient documents at Mr. Harrison's. He began to unfold, with a hand trembling with anxiety, the musty skin, when there fell from it a detached piece of paper, folded in the shape of a letter. He picked it up from the floor, and eagerly opened it. The handwriting was a very pale yellow colour, but the words were distinctly legible. They were as follows, but in the French language:—

"*To the Seigneurs Albert and Laurence O'Meara.*

"Respected Seigneurs:—Your father has followed the lord, your grandfather, to the tomb. With his latest breath, he ordered me to carry these writings to you. I have not the means;—I am a beggar. I am watched: the usurper is planning to keep the estate; but we got the document from him. It was famously managed;—but I am too ill to seek you out. What a miserable country! Would that I could serve your lordships in my beautiful France, as I have followed the lord your father here! You will find the writings in his tomb when the good king James returns. I know not what else to do with them. I am, Seigneurs, your devoted and faithful follower,

"*March*, 1692. "HYPPOLYTE SAULIEU."

As he scanned and puzzled out the ill-formed and now indistinct handwriting of this ancient note, Bryan re-

membered the traditions he had ever heard of the fidelity of this French soldier, who, when his ancestor Laurence O'Meara had joined one of the regiments sent by Louis XIV. prior to the battle of the Boyne, had attached himself to him,—had lingered with him, during his adverse fortunes,—and finally, after the death of his patron, had settled in Ireland, and had become the progenitor of his own present cottagers, the Sawleys. All this flashed upon his mind, as he impatiently pored over the note. He knew that the sons of his unfortunate ancestor had been left in France, at the time of his father's first exile; and that, absent at the time of his death, they had, on their return to Ireland, been reduced to labour for their bread. These were the two to whom the note was addressed; and who, it now seemed to him, had been kept out of their possessions by the very extraordinary means which their father's follower had taken to preserve it to them. Bryan knew that the cemetery had been closed up, and that the faithful Hyppolyte himself had died long ere the two sons of his benefactor had reached their native country.

Such surmises, however, delayed not our hero in the impatience which had now taken possession of him. He cast aside the scarcely perused letter, and seized the parchment to which it referred. Eagerly, too eagerly, he opened it: then suddenly recollecting himself, he made the sign of the cross on his breast, and offered up his hopes and his fears to the Great Disposer of all things. With a calm mind, he unfolded and perused the document.

A few lines discovered its purport. It was a grant made by William III. in 1691, of all the lands and lordships of the O'Mearas to Colonel Robert James, in reward for the good services which he had rendered to the cause of the ursurper, in the "glorious" battle of the Boyne, as it was there called: the which lands and lordships were declared to be forfeited to the crown, owing to the treason of Laurence O'Meara, who had been engaged in the same battle, on the side of the dethroned king. So far, there was nothing in the deed to excite any hopes in Bryan, or to account for the anxiety of the master of Hyppolyte Saulieu to recover and preserve it. But, after the usual waste of words, the document went

on to declare, that whereas Albert, the father of the said Laurence, did not personally assist King James—although it was to be feared that he was a malignant at heart—and in the hope that the two grandsons of the old man, who were then living abroad—those to whom Hyppolyte's letter was addressed—would see the error of their father's ways, and, returning to Ireland, would be brought up in a due abhorrence of rebellion and popery;—and also to prove the affection which the said King William bore to his Irish subjects, many of whom were much attached to the ancient family of O'Meara;—therefore, and for all these reasons, the document provided that the aforesaid Colonel Robert James should allow, out of the rents of the property, a sufficient yearly sum of money for the comfortable subsistence of the said old Albert O'Meara during the term of his natural life, and for the good and proper education of his two grandsons, and for their maintenance so long as he, the said Colonel Robert James should live; and that, at his death, they, or their heirs, administrators, or assigns, were to be reinstated in the full and complete enjoyment of the ancient property and lordship of Westbury, as completely as if it had never been forfeited;—the grant to the said Colonel Robert James being solely made to punish the treason of the father, and to preserve the peace of the district in those troubled times, but not permanently to dispossess the family of the ancient proprietors, for whose future loyal and peaceable conduct full security had been given to the government.

Such was the purport of this extraordinary document, which Bryan read and re-read, until he could no longer doubt its vast importance. The letter of Hyppolyte Saulieu was explained at once. The Orange Colonel, Robert James, had wished to convert a life interest into a permanent possession, by destroying or making away with the deed: this, Bryan's ancestor had prevented; but dying while his boys were abroad, they, on their return to their own country, were unaware of their claims to the family lands, and found no one to contest those which the sons of Colonel James had set up in their absence. The rightful heirs had sunk into the class of the peasantry;

and Westbury was believed to be the lawful possession of the descendants of the Orange soldier.

"Yet," thought Bryan to himself, "some memory of this substitution must have lingered in the land; else whence the old prophecy of Nora O'Sullivan, which I have never been able to forget?"

He arose, and paced his narrow room with a feverish excitement. Every nerve was stretched beyond its wont: his mind appeared to become more capacious; his bodily frame seemed to enlarge itself. At length, then, he should resume that position which he had ever felt to be his birthright: he should hurl the intruder from his neighbourhood: he should be the restorer of his family: the protector of his peasantry: his triumph would be, in some sort, the triumph of his country, the triumph of his religion: if he had made himself so respected while a lowly peasant, what would he not accomplish when proprietor of the lordly domains of Westbury? And Arabella Foxglove—how proudly would she who loved him then, acknowledge her love now! And her parents—how would they feel towards him? Would they still look upon him as the son of the peasant who died to rescue their son, or as the heir, the representative of an honoured race, once more restored to wealth and power?

On—on—on ran his irregular, his conflicting thoughts. He was too excited to sleep: he was too excited to pray. He felt that he ought to have learnt the tidings which thus aroused him, in a different spirit: that thanksgiving for the past, that prayer for the future, ought to have been his first impulse. Mentally, he prayed; mentally, he was thankful: but he could not abstract his thoughts from the world, and raise them wholly to Heaven.

He descended the long staircase of the tower, and went out into the open air. The moon was setting: the stars shone out. The air was frosty and clear. He walked slowly towards his mother's cottage; and calmer thoughts and feelings came over him as he walked. He lifted the latch, and entered that lowly shed. All was still; not a spark burned on the hearth. He passed noiselessly up the few steps to the room in which he knew that his mother lay. That sainted woman slept a calm, sweet

sleep, as of innocent childhood. He knelt by her bedside.

"Mother!" he softly said.

"Heaven bless thee, my son, what is the matter?" answered the parent, starting from her sleep.

"Mother, teach me to pray," replied Bryan. "I cannot pray alone. Pray with me: the prayers that you taught me—the first I ever knew."

"Are you unwell, my dear son?"

"No—no. I have cause to rejoice—to be thankful: but I have not the grace to pray alone. Let us begin."

And then, in that low thatched chamber, dimly lighted by the sickly glare of the waning moon, those two pure hearts breathed forth their supplications to Him who had been a father to the orphan, a support to the widow. For a while, they prayed; and as the tears rose in his eyes and at length streamed down his sunburnt cheeks, the hardy son repeated every prayer which the infant orphan had first learned from the desolate young widow, in the land of the stranger.

"Mother," he said at length, "that will do. I am calm now; and will tell you what has excited me. I have recovered a deed that will restore us to our inheritance—the lands of Westbury."

"My poor boy—"

"Doubt me not: I am calm now, and know what I say. The right is certain, even in law: the only doubt is, how to enforce it. Say not aught of the matter to any living soul. As you know, I expect Mr. Harrison every day. I will not move until I have consulted with him. May God direct us. I will tell you all to-morrow."

Noiselessly as he had entered, he left that peaceful shed; and returning briskly to his home, cast himself upon his bed, and slept soundly until the sun was high above the horizon.

CHAPTER XXXII.

Meanwhile, the weeks,—nay, even the months, had sped on; and Mr. Harrison's visit was still delayed. Bryan O'Meara, who had expected him from week to week, had not moved in the matter of his claims to his ancestral property. He had continued to live in the quiet and humble way which he had chalked out to himself when he had first purchased the little farm at Leadale; and had made himself more and more respected by the surrounding gentry, and by his more humble neighbours. His friend, Larkin, had been ordained, and was attached to a newly-built chapel in the village, for which Mr. Harrison had forwarded funds: and in the society of this highly-cultivated young man, he had found that mental companionship, the absence of which would have otherwise been the greatest privation consequent upon his present state of existence.

Nor, we will admit, had he found less solace in the thoughts of Arabella Foxglove, and in the hopes which he began to allow himself to indulge respecting her. Of her attachment to him, he could not entertain a doubt; with the prospect of recovering his lost inheritance, what should prevent him from giving way to fond hopes of their future union? His family was as ancient and honourable as hers: his education and manners were such as would adorn any rank: fortune alone had been wanting to sanction his love and crown his pretensions. Hope, now, was once more his; although he strove to subject it to all the chances and delays of such legal proceedings as might be necessary ere he could recover his own.

Nor is it to be supposed that the popular excitement of the peasantry against the dominion of England, or rather against the ascendancy of the Orange faction, had, in any degree, subsided. Midnight meetings and secret gatherings, had, on the contrary, become more frequent; and outbursts occasionally occurred when the angry spirit of the multitude refused to subject itself to the prudence of its elected chieftains. To prevent all such partial, and therefore useless, risings, Bryan O'Meara earnestly exerted him-

self: and had the satisfaction of restraining them so far as his own influence extended. Beyond his circle, however, the country was in a more disturbed state; and blood often flowed on both sides, and increased the bitterness of party, of national, and of religious hostility. A tumult, arising in such feelings, had recently been committed in his own neighbourhood by a party of armed stragglers from a distant part of the province, and had occasioned Father Larkin to receive into his own house an inmate, who had aroused all his sympathy ere he yet knew the more peculiarly interesting circumstances of her history.

Our hero was seated, one afternoon, in Father Larkin's parlour, conversing with the priest and this inmate, a beautiful young girl, who stood before them in the deepest mourning, when a stranger gentleman, also in mourning, opened the wicket leading into the little garden in front of the house, and advanced towards the door. None of the party perceived his approach; and they started when the old housekeeper threw open the parlour door and announced,—

"Mr. Harrison, your reverence."

"My dear sir!" exclaimed Bryan, gladly springing to his feet.

The visitor, however, appeared to be no less surprised than those amongst whom he came. He suddenly stood still, on perceiving the young woman we have mentioned; and in a trembling voice exclaimed,—"Maria!"

"My name, sir, is Emma," said the beautiful girl, curtseying elegantly, while her eyes suffused themselves with tears; "my poor mother's name was Maria."

"You are a repetition of her," answered Mr. Harrison, now blushing in his turn, and looking awkwardly, and yet intently, into that beautiful face. "But forty years have elapsed," he continued in a hesitating voice. "But who are you, however? You spoke of your mother as having been;—is she no longer living? Forgive my abruptness, but tell me your name, and who you are."

"Alas, sir, I am only a poor orphan: my mother was the widow of Lieutenant Beauchamp."

"The same—the same!" said Mr. Harrison. "And she is dead!" he exclaimed, turning aside for an instant.

"Go out now, my good girl," said Father Larkin to

the orphan. "We will tell Mr. Harrison all the circumstances."

"Excuse, Mr. Larkin, the abrupt manner of my entrance," said the visitor, after a moment's pause, while he kindly took the hand of Bryan; "but the sight of that face recalled, as you must have perceived, the memory of a once fondly-cherished image. I speak to those whom I may trust; and I would fain first know all that you can tell me respecting her whom I have so unexpectedly met. How came she here?"

In a few words, Father Larkin stated that about a month before, a public conveyance from Roscommon to Athlone had been stopped by a party of armed peasantry; that the young girl with her mother had taken shelter at his house; that a detachment of military had been sent out from Athlone to disperse the rioters; but that while doing this, the officer in command of the troop had been slain by a stray shot; that his body had been brought to the manse, and recognised by the elder lady as being that of her son, to be present at whose marriage they were travelling to Athlone; that this discovery, added to previous distress and illness, had worked upon her mind; and that three weeks had now elapsed since she was laid in a grave beside her son; and that, at the moment Mr. Harrison had entered the room, he and O'Meara had been consulting with the poor orphan as to her future prospects in life,—or, more correctly speaking, as to her means of gaining a livelihood.

"Let me request you to call her in again," said Mr. Harrison. "I have but walked over from Athlone this morning, and shall be glad to spend the afternoon in inquiring into a history in which I cannot feel otherwise than deeply interested. As I mean to make a long visit to my friend O'Meara, he will excuse me that I defer its commencement for an hour or two."

The young girl was again summoned, and invited to seat herself amongst her lately-found protectors. She did so with modesty, but yet with a self-possession which could only result from the perfect artlessness and earnestness of her character.

"I must know something of your history, Emma," said Mr. Harrison, kindly taking her hand.

"It is soon told, sir; I have been nursemaid in my

uncle's family since I was thirteen," replied the orphan, smiling sadly.

"But before that age? What do you know,—what have you heard of your family history,—of that of your mother? I was acquainted with her forty years ago, and ask the question from no idle curiosity."

"I must be thankful, sir, to any one who will interest themselves in my fate," she answered, as she wiped away a tear. "I have often heard my mother say that she was of a wealthy English family; but that she offended her elder brother, her only guardian, by refusing a gentleman whom he wished her to marry, and by eloping with a lieutenant in a marching regiment, who had nothing but his pay on which to support a wife. He was killed soon after my birth; and my mother then went to live with my elder sister, who had married a person in what she considered small circumstances, and was settled in county Roscommon. They both seemed equally fond of me, for my aunt had no children of her own. I did not see much of my uncle; but he ever seemed pleased with me. I wandered into cabins, or played with other children; or sat with an old crone, who used to tell me strange stories. As soon as I could understand, I was told by the servant woman that my uncle gave me food and clothing, and that I was to work for him in return. I remember her putting a vessel full of water on the floor, and beside it a basket of young potatoes, bidding me wash them. This was my first act of servitude; but I was delighted with my job, and thought they looked, when clean, as if astonished and smiling to find themselves above ground. Then the pleasure of turning the handle of the barrel churn and of hearing the cream splashing within! Then the poultry! My aunt, whose health obliged her to keep the house, was amused to see me keep at a distance the geese and turkeys, bigger than myself, by throwing the grain as far off as I could. I used to follow the hay-makers and reapers to the field; and the farmer's year was a round of enjoyment to me."

Mr. Harrison had urged her again and again to continue this narrative; and the kindness of his manner had encouraged her to speak with a fluency and a freedom that astonished herself.

"Thus I had lived," she continued, "until my twelfth year, when a great change befel."

"What mean you?" asked Mr. Harrison.

"My aunt died; and, within a twelvemonth, my uncle married a girl twenty years younger than himself; and within another twelvemonth a baby was born, and I was told that I was to be its nursemaid. I told my mother that I should like it very much, and she said that she would not discourage me; but that we should find our situation in the family much changed now that a stranger had replaced her own sister. I feared nothing: work had, as yet, been only play to me."

"Yes," interposed Bryan; "I believe that there are few boys and girls, at school, who would not gladly exchange their lessons for the amusements of a farm-house, such as Emma has described her infantine labours to have appeared to her. So are children broken in to a life of privation and of labour, ere they find that labour and privation are no child's play!"

"When the monthly nurse left," continued Emma, in answer to a sign from Mr. Harrison, "she placed the baby in my arms, and charged me not to let it fall. I gazed at it, proud of my charge: nature throws over childhood the charm of helplessness. It soon shut up its dear little blue eyes and slept. I laid it in the cradle and rocked it. In the course of eight years, my aunt, as I was still permitted to call her, had four more children. I received them all in turn, and only regretted that my nursery kept me apart from my poor mother, who was employed in other work, and bore, I fear, less patiently her altered circumstances."

Mr. Harrison sighed, and there was a pause in the conversation, as his mind again portrayed to him the beautiful, light-hearted, but vain and capricious girl of former years.

"No," he thought to himself, "hers was not a mind to be improved, even by adversity. I had an escape. Emma is a sweet creature: her expression better than her mother's was;—not that vague gaze around for admiration, but bespeaking thought and firmness. Mine was the superficial love of two-and-twenty:—an illusion."

"What sort of a man was your uncle, Emma?" resumed Mr. Harrison, after this pause.

"A very intelligent farmer, sir."

"Was that all?"

"No, indeed: he was a very benevolent man, and gave great attention to the condition of the poor; he did all he could to serve them, both as an employer and in his capacity of justice of the peace: he was much looked up to by them, and was acquainted with every one of them in his neighbourhood, inquiring in detail into their means of existence. He was no proselytist, but contented to help them to do well in this life, though an assertor of Protestant ascendancy."

"What sort of Protestant was he?"

"I do not know, sir: I doubt if he knew himself."

"Was he a reading man?"

"He told me one day, that till he was nineteen, he was a mere farmer and sportsman; but, that then the fancy took him that he would educate himself; and that he made some advances towards reading Latin and French. A great many well-informed men came occasionally to visit at our house."

"Did you talk with any of them?"

"Sometimes at supper, for I took my other meals in the nursery; and sometimes when I walked out with the children—as I was the cousin, and not simply the nursemaid—they would enter a little into converse with me."

"You have read a good deal, Miss Beauchamp?" asked Mr. Larkin.

"No, sir; I had no time, for I was expected to work at my needle when the children did not occupy me: two or three hours on Sundays I employed in reading."

"Were you at any school, Emma?"

"At eight years old I went to the village school to learn to read and write; and, as my mother had already taught me in some degree, I made great progress. The master told me that the earth goes round the sun, and the moon round the earth; that the moon causes the tides; and why the days are long in summer, and short in winter: though I never could understand how the day and night are equal in spring and autumn. But I am a great deal too free in talking so much before you and his reverence: only you seem to wish it."

"I am very much pleased, my good girl," replied the priest, "pray go on."

"'There, my little Emmy,' said the old schoolmaster, 'you know what one of the greatest poets of antiquity begged of the muses to shew him; and I am the tenth muse that tell it to you, darling. Make much of it.' My new aunt took every thing under her own care, and was so active, and made so many changes in the house, that I was glad to escape into the nursery, when that asylum was offered to me: there I enjoyed comparative quiet and independence."

"I want to know, Emma," said Mr. Harrison, "how you acquired the ingeniousness, the plain good sense, and apprehension of right and wrong, that seems to distinguish you?"

"If I have those qualities, sir, I learned them from the children, who have them naturally. We are all spoiled after five years old: at that age, our judgment is clear and uninfluenced by the mistakes of our elders; and, though children have many bad passions, yet it is the hopes and fears they then begin to entertain, that aggravate the evil and weaken the good, turning into motives what were merely impulses."

"You have reasoned on this matter, nurse," observed Mr. Larkin.

"My attention, sir, was confined for many years to this unobserved, but most important, portion of our fellow-creatures. I could teach them but little, but they taught me much. Our minds are never so active—so clear, I may add—so reasoning, as in childhood: besides that our curiosity is unrepressed by the indifference and harshness with which it is treated in after-life. I once thought the death of a human being the most striking, the most impressive event, of all that regards us: but, surely, the birth of an infant is equally remarkable. I had walked between my mother and my uncle, when we followed my aunt to the grave. I had been awed by the solemn scene, and separation from one who made a part of my earliest recollections. Within two years, my uncle's first-born came into the world. Came into the world! What considerations does this phrase include: how much has she to do and to suffer! What will be her mind—her temper? Will she be a cause of happiness, or of misery, to herself and others? She too must die: death must be

the end of her account also—if late, yet certain. She was given to me in charge. I was called by a name that implied a service of a most tender nature. I bore her on my arm: she became part of myself. I was to her the chief object of her affection, for I was ever with her. She understood my looks; and, if not my words, the meaning of all I said. She learned to lisp the name of Emmy. She was weaned, and, thenceforward, received all her food from my hands. Her tottering steps acquired steadiness by my support. Soon I had to transfer my care to another; and yet, it seemed to be not another, but the same: and my first vied with me in love for my second, and increased, by sharing my interest. And thus began my study of human nature."

"To what did it lead you, Emma?"

"To the conviction, that it is quite a mistake to call infancy the age of innocence. Infants are, indeed, innocent, as not knowing right from wrong, and as the injuries they do have no effect on any society but that of the nursery: but anger, revenge, spite, joy in another's harm, selfishness,—all these are natural to them. They have no sense of justice: that sense is learned by man out of regard to his own security. Infants do not want it; an elder child is not afraid that another, younger and weaker, will retaliate, and, therefore, takes to itself whatever it may covet. They are proud wilful despots, giving for a reason, 'such is our pleasure.'"

"Or like the English legislators," said Mr. Larkin, "in their acts regarding Ireland."

"Children seem to have all the bad passions of grown-up men, which instruction may teach us to control, but to which their want of understanding leaves a full sway."

"But did you observe no kindly affections in them—no benevolence?"

"Indeed, your reverence, I found them very grateful. Men and women sometimes manage and dole out their gratitude according to circumstances. Children always love those who give them pleasure. It is not true that dogs are the most grateful of animals, for infants are equally so. As to their kindness to one another, I fear it is often prompted by a desire of displaying their power. The same propensity may make them beneficent, that may

sometimes make them even cruel. A child of three years old is, to a child of one year old, as a giant to a dwarf; and the question is between petting and tormenting: but, as the big child is prevented from tormenting, its vanity takes refuge in conferring favours, and being rewarded by the sense of obligation conferred."

"I never heard you talk in this way before, Emma," said Bryan O'Meara; "and I wonder how you could be so fond of children, having so bad an opinion of them."

"My dear Mr. O'Meara, I knew them to be capable of becoming good men and women—for such there are in the world. I knew that reason would, in time, teach them justice; and that the pleasure they found in doing good, would be directed by right principle. Self-love is at the bottom of all our faults; yet, it is not wrong in itself, for we are bidden to love our neighbour as ourself: that one precept sets all right around us."

"You have very good religious sentiments, Emma," observed Mr. Harrison; "what teaching have you had on that matter?"

"I always said my prayers, night and morning."

"Well, that was something."

"And my catechism every Sunday—standing up near the fire, with my hands behind me. One day my uncle laughed at me, so the catechism was given up."

"Was there no minister of the Establishment?" Mr. Larkin asked.

"Yes, sir, one from Elphin every fortnight: he had another curacy five miles off, in a contrary direction, on the alternate Sundays. He gave me Watts's hymns, when I was seven years old, and bid me be a good girl."

"What congregation had he?"

"There were three families of us, besides the clerk; and, as my uncle held his land of the church of Elphin, he went to church every time, when the weather permitted; and my aunt took me with her till I became nurse, and then I could only go there once a month."

"Were you ever confirmed, Emma?"

"Yes, in the year of my uncle's widowhood: when I was twelve years old, my uncle took me and my mother to Elphin, in the car, with a youthful member of each of the two other families—a great girl of eighteen, daughter

to a dairy farmer, and a boy nearly my own age, son of a labourer. After the service and sermon, we went to the rails of the communion-table, and found them occupied by some well-dressed children: we waited, and took our turn with some others of the second class. The bishop knocked my head against the boy's, putting his finger and thumb on my head, and the three other fingers of the right hand on the boy's head, while he laid his other hand on the head of the girl: he would have confirmed a fourth at the same instant, but that the girl or boy nearest to my companion was too short."

"Had you received any previous instruction?" the father asked.

"I received, sir, a strip of paper, left by our minister with the clerk, who gave it to me, saying, 'Here, Emma dear, you will go to be bishoped next Sunday.' It contained, 'On examination, I find the bearer duly qualified for confirmation.'—This was duly signed."

"May I inquire at what age your little cousins were baptized?"

"On the first Sunday that the curate came after their birth. I carried the baby into the parlour; we said a few prayers, and the curate sprinkled some water into the child's face."

"That aspersion as it is called," observed Mr. Harrison, "is not according to the Anglican Rubric, which directs the water to be poured, as with the Catholics. Had not you a christening, Emma?"

"Yes, sir; the three girls were christened all together, and afterwards the two boys."

"Merry meetings, were they not?"

"We were a large party, sir; three godfathers and six godmothers."

"You were one of them?"

"Yes; my mother and I stood for the youngest girl."

"And, pray, what is the opinion entertained among you concerning baptism?"

"My uncle came, after one of the ceremonies, to drink tea with me in my nursery, as he did now and then, and I asked him the meaning of it:—'A form,' said he, 'to make the child a Christian.' 'But we pray for the remission of its sins,' I said. 'Nonsense,' said he, 'how

can a baby be guilty of any?' 'But the prayer book speaks of original sin.' 'We are not obliged to believe every thing in that book,' he replied. I thought I discovered afterwards, that original sin, however it originated, is a matter of fact, since we are born with dispositions to evil, though with capacities for all good."

Mr. Harrison continued the topic.

"What sort of women were your uncle's two wives?" he asked. "Were they of any use in forming your mind?"

"My mother used to say, that the first was a dressing, painted, gay creature; always visiting at Elphin, where her father was a sort of merchant. She loved her husband, however, and he was grieved at her loss; though, after seven years of ill health, it was a happy release."

"We will hope so," said Father Larkin. "And the second?"

"A farmer's daughter—resolved to be a mere farmer's wife; a girl of three-and-twenty, bustling, scolding, ill-mannered; quite at home in her dairy, adding seven cows to the two we had before, and a dairy woman to help her. Yet, she was generous, and made presents as an amends for rudeness. She liked good eating, and kept a plentiful table; and thought she went through the duties of life to perfection."

"I wonder your mother should have let you take what may be called a regular service, under such a woman," said Mr. Larkin.

"What could she do, sir? Alone, we could have had but the bare necessaries of life, no society, and no future provision. I must have gone to service after all. Do not blame my mother, sir, for my nursery was a good school to me: it was a place of solitude and reflection. I observed the faults of our nature, and reasoned both myself and my little cousins out of them."

"Can you dance, Emma?" asked Mr. Harrison.

"No, sir," she replied, with a smile.

"Can you draw?"

"No."

"Can you talk French and Italian?"

"No."

"Can you play on the piano?"

"No, sir."

"And yet you are one of the most accomplished women I ever knew. Good sense and good temper are your accomplishments."

CHAPTER XXXIII.

The exertion which Emma Beauchamp had made to reply to Mr. Harrison's questions, with the frankness and the depth of thought which she had ever encouraged in private, but which she was now induced to exhibit by the evident interest which the stranger took in her welfare and in her habits of mind, had almost got the better of her strength, reduced by previous anxiety,—and she had felt herself obliged to rise and leave the room after hearing his last most flattering expressions of approbation.

She left the little parlour, and sought the cooler air of the meadow adjoining the manse. Mr. Harrison, however, seemed anxious to learn still more of the history of the daughter of the loved one of his youth,—and still pursued his inquiries from Mr. Larkin and from Bryan. But they could communicate little more than had been already detailed. The poor girl was left utterly destitute; appeals, in her behalf, had been made to her different relations, and had been answered as such appeals generally are;—each one had expressed the strongest wishes for her welfare, and had not doubted but that her other relatives would do something to make her condition in life secure and comfortable—which, unfortunately, it was not now in their own power to effect.

"I can do nothing better for her," observed Father Larkin, "than obtain for her a situation in the service of some respectable family, where she may have an opportunity of obtaining that further religious instruction of which she has so great need. You may have observed, from the manner in which she spoke of the Protestant piety to which she had been accustomed, that her residence here has already been productive of good. She has

had the opportunity of witnessing the humble and real piety of my congregation; and, above all, of conversing with my friend O'Meara's excellent mother. Such conversations cannot be without fruit; and she has, this day, expressed a hope to me that I would afford her further instruction."

"And an ingenuous mind, like hers, will reason for the sake of discovering the truth: not for the sake of triumph in argument," observed Mr. Harrison.

"I could not afford time for such arguments," replied the priest: "but I must place her in a house where good example and opportunity will leave me very little to do."

"Keep her with you a week or two longer, I pray you, Larkin," said Bryan: "I am convinced that young Morgan has taken a serious liking to her; and would he marry her, it would be a better establishment than she could ever hope for were she once to go out as a common servant."

"But, I fear me, his religious principles are too unsettled," replied the priest, sighing. "I believe that both parties are well-inclined to one another: but our young *protégée* should be better grounded in her own faith, to be able to resist the specious arguments of farmer Morgan."

"And who is this young Morgan?" asked Mr. Harrison, with much interest.

"A young farmer, sir: but hither, in truth, he comes. He is rather fond of speaking of himself, and will freely answer your inquiry," replied Mr. Larkin.

A tall, well-looking man, of about eight-and-twenty, entered the little garden wicket, and advanced towards the door. He was habited in a shooting-jacket, and dressed in a manner not unsuited to out-of-door work, but, at the same time, affecting gentility of rural station. The door was opened by the priest's housekeeper; and he entered the parlour.

"I have brought back the newspaper, Mr. Larkin," he said, in a frank, open voice.

"With Virgil, as usual, in the other hand," interposed O'Meara. "Let me introduce you, Morgan, to my friend Mr. Harrison; who, having enjoyed all the advantages of

an English university education, will appreciate your classical tastes."

The young man and Harrison shook hands with cordiality: and after some conversation, calculated to inspire the rustic scholar with confidence and self-esteem, the latter expressed surprise at his evident information, and said,—

"May I ask, sir, where you had your education?"

"I was sent to school," replied Morgan, "from ten to fourteen years old. I was a spoiled child, being the only one that lived, after several born before me had died infants. As there could be no reason for a farmer's boy learning Latin, I was perverse enough to take a liking to it; and for seven years that I worked for my father, I often gave him occasion to repent having given me so much schooling. I discovered that French and Italian were very much like Latin, and in the winter evenings contrived to attain a little understanding of them that was of use to me when I went into those countries."

"You have been in France and Italy?"

"Yes: when I had finished my apprenticeship to my father, I squeezed from him his leave and a few pounds. Going on board a vessel at Cork, and landing at St. Malo, I walked to Paris, and from thence to the south of France, where I arrived at the very beginning of the year of the jubilee. My money was all gone. I put on the weeds of a pilgrim, and begged my way to Rome."

"There was great difference of opinion," observed the anchoret, "as to the merit of a pilgrimage to the confession of St. Peter. I am afraid you fared but ill."

"Troth, I had, according to your English proverb, more kicks than halfpence; and even at the bureau, where I took my passport and gave in my motive for leaving France, they laughed at me. However, in Italy they pitied me, as a poor Irishman fleeing from persecution."

"The bigotry of the English," said Mr. Harrison, "is detested by every Catholic, and their tyranny by every unbeliever on the continent."

"I was charitably treated at Rome," pursued Morgan, "and went through the ceremonies for gaining the indulgence of the *Anno Santo*."

"You surprise and interest me very much, sir: pray tell me how you got home."

"I had another pilgrimage in view of a different sort—to the tomb, or what is called the tomb of Virgil. I wanted to see Naples: but I had no funds."

"An appeal to classical enthusiasm," said Bryan, "would have been more strange than even an appeal to religious zeal."

"I knew it," answered Morgan, "and did not make the trial. I hired myself as servant to an Irish family going to pass the season of Lent at Naples."

"Were they Catholics?"

"No: Irish Protestants,—the worst of all Protestants. They would not have taken me, but that my knowledge of the *patois* might be of use to them, as their other man and their woman talked only English, as did the gentlemen and ladies."

"This mode of life," said Mr. Harrison, "enabled you to see a great deal more than you would have done otherwise."

"Yes; I got as far as the door at many grand assemblies; and by the help of the domestics, I knew more than they who formed them. I went a sight-seeing, too, that I might ask questions for those who could not ask for themselves. You have been abroad, sir, as well as O'Meara, and can understand that I was the only one of the family that could much profit by my travels."

"That may easily be apprehended."

"We returned to Rome for the Holy Week and Easter. I resigned my place of courier; put on my pilgrim's cloak; and, with all the merit of a palmer, who has received his palm at Jerusalem, found my way back to Milan: here I met with a small remittance. I turned it into French gold, and would not quit my staff and cockle shell till I got to Pont Beauvoisin. I then walked across France to Bordeaux."

"Pray bring your history down to the present time."

"It is soon told. I came home to set up in business, but our neighbour, Tobin, called me a giddy young fellow that knew nothing of farming, and advised me to go to England and live with an English farmer, as he had done. I took my pocket Virgil and went to Norfolk, where I

learnt to plough and shoot, for two years, and am but very recently returned home."

"Many years of health and happiness to you, sir; and thanks for your story," said Mr. Harrison, rising to go away. But Morgan, to detain him, said,—

"As you have been brought up at one of the English universities, sir, you may chance to have read Homer."

"Chance is the right word, Mr. Morgan: the chances were against me; but I have chanced to read both the poems of Homer."

"I did not learn Greek," said the other: "indeed, I can hardly say I learned Latin, for I never could understand any thing but the meaning of it, and did not like to be bothered by the schoolmaster about what he called the grammatical construction. I read after a way of my own."

"If, in your way, you understood the work, that was enough."

"Yes," said Morgan, "enough for the boy's, but not for the master's trade. Do you prefer Homer to Virgil?"

"By no means. Virgil has more feeling and delicacy than Homer; and the seventh book of the Æneid equals the sublimity of Homer."

"It is not because I am a farmer," said the other, "that I particularly admire the Georgics. There is more true poetry in them than in all the Italians! It is fortunate for the four great poets of Italy that they were the first, and established their reputation before the taste of men was improved. I except Ariosto: his wit is his excellence."

Mr. Harrison expressed his assent, and concealed his astonishment; and telling the young man that he should be glad to become better acquainted with him, at the residence of his friend O'Meara, the two took leave of Father Larkin, and sought the neighbouring tower.

"Think not, my dear Bryan," said Mr. Harrison to our hero, as he sauntered around his peaceful homestead, "think not that I do not feel fully the pleasure of seeing you again. But forgotten memories have been strongly aroused by the unexpected presence of that young girl; and I wished to satisfy my curiosity in regard to her, before I began the more regular and tranquil enjoyment

of your society. You, however, my dear son, are not as composed as I had hoped to find you. Nay, deny it not," he playfully insisted, "deny it not; there is a something on your mind which agitates you."

"I would not deny it, my dear sir," Bryan replied. "I admit that I have a great source of anxiety,—of new-found hope: that I have anxiously awaited your presence to consult you upon my anticipations. But I will not now intrude them upon you. Tell me, rather, how you yourself are, and how are my friends at home?"

"At home, Bryan? have you not learned to consider Ireland as your real, your only home? I had almost feared to find you totally estranged from England, and with a renovated patriotism which would cause you to waver in acceding to the new plans which I have formed for you."

"How mean you, my dear sir? I love Ireland truly,—fervently; but I cannot forget the land in which I passed the first years of my life;—the country of you, my more than father,—of the venerable Abbé Piron,"—

"And of Arabella Foxglove. I will complete the sentence for you," interposed Mr. Harrison, laughing.

"Good God, sir, what can you mean?" exclaimed Bryan, with nervous agitation. "What can you mean by alluding, thus lightly, to an attachment which you have ever sought to discourage? Can you mean to bid me hope?"

"I do, my dear boy. Circumstances are changed. My cousin George is dead."

"Well, sir."

"Well, sir," repeated Mr. Harrison, playfully; "and as he was my only relative, I have now no rightful claimant upon my property, and mean to bequeath it to a certain wild Irish lad, in whom I am interested, named Bryan O'Meara."

"My dear sir!" exclaimed Bryan, pausing where he stood, and slowly taking the hand of his benefactor, while his fine eyes were suffused with moisture.

"I have doubted whether I should tell you now of my intention," resumed Mr. Harrison, "or keep it secret, and live an independent old bachelor, without relatives—courted and befooled by the dozens who would flatter

my inclinations to self-importance, and strive to establish some claim upon my property. There would have been enjoyment, selfish enjoyment, certainly, in keeping the secret: but I thought that better kind of enjoyment might be procured by divulging it. I thought that I could create the gratitude, the fellow-feeling, the bond of common interest, which unites parents to their children. I thought that it would be sweet to enjoy, during my life-time, closer sympathy with one whom I esteem sufficiently to adopt as a son; I thought that the affection of each of us would be deepened for the other; that I could anticipate a happy—a successful futurity with him who should succeed me; and that I should like to live the remaining years of my life without hearing the question constantly exchanged amongst my associates, 'I wonder who old Harrison will leave his property to?' These were motives which would have urged me, if only for my own sake, to divulge my intentions: but when I considered, moreover, that my doing so would materially influence your prospects in life,—that it would enable you to prosecute your suit to Arabella with some chance of success,—that it would help you onwards in that career of benevolence and usefulness which I should wish you to follow, I could not hesitate to make the avowal: I have made it. You are my heir."

"Indeed, indeed, my dear sir; your hopes shall not be disappointed!" Bryan O'Meara fervently exclaimed. "My gratitude for your kind feeling towards me, and for the prospect which you will enable me to realize—"

"Nay; you must not reckon too surely upon Arabella," interposed Mr. Harrison, anxious to arrest the current of his young friend's grateful expressions. "The possession of Willoughby will certainly alter your position in the world; but, after all, you will be but a most indifferent match in a worldly point of view."

"Oh! but, my dear sir, I have other hopes; I have an assurance—"

"Well, well," Mr. Harrison exclaimed, "we will speak of them hereafter, when we are more calm. Yonder I see the young farmer whom we met at Mr. Larkin's. He is doubtless returning home: but he looks as though he would like to come in. I wish he would; and we would

have a cup of tea together. I need not say that I am interested in him, and would obtain some further insight into his mind and principles. If those are as they should be, the connection would certainly be a most desirable one for that poor girl, and I would endeavour to promote it."

With the silent enjoyment of many and various sympathies, these two excellent men retired to the narrow sitting-room of the tower. Mr. Harrison had rightly divined the inclinations of Morgan on his homeward walk; for while he and Bryan were taking their tea together in the evening, Syra, the maid of all-work, came into the room. "Mr. Morgan is at the door, inquiring if you are at home. I tell him you are," she said; "and he bids me go and ask you yourself, though he says he knows you are at home as well as I do."

"Desire him to walk in, Syra."

Morgan presented himself. "What would Syra have done," he asked, "had you told her to say you were not at home, since she finds so much difficulty in saying that you are?"

"She would have put me under the necessity of saying it myself, Mr. Morgan: and then you must perforce have believed me. Your meaning in observing the ceremonial of previous inquiry cannot be misapprehended. Notwithstanding the unsophisticated nature of Syra, you would have me to be *maître chez moi* in the evening, and would respect my friend's newness to the ways of us farmers."

"I assure you and him," Morgan replied, "that my respect will supply the want of an antechamber and a lying valet, such as I have been myself. I have, therefore, learned not to respect any one the more or the less for having or not having such a precious personage at his orders."

"But did you not regard it as a lie," Bryan asked, "when you, as courier, refused admittance to visitors, by saying, 'not at home?'"

"Sure I did not: nobody was deceived; so there was no lie in the case. But my Protestant master could not refrain from saying, 'the priest will have to give you absolution for that, David.' 'If it was a sin, sir,' said I, 'it ought not to have been commanded.' 'Especially,' said

he, 'by us, that have no one to absolve us.' 'You will do that for yourselves, sir,' said I. 'Do not be impertinent, David.' 'I will not begin, sir;' and I heard him as I went out of the room, say, 'D—n the fellow, we must let him alone!' instead of turning me away, as he ought to have done."

"It was very base in him to take advantage of the submission of your service to insult your religion," Mr. Harrison observed.

"Yes: but they were so peevish at finding themselves where their own was not ascendant, that they were at it again and again. 'You shall go to mass with us at San Ferdinando, David,' he would say: 'we are not so illiberal as to object to going to your church, though you in Ireland will never go to ours.' 'If you think it right to do what you think wrong, sir,' said I, 'you will not think it wrong for me to do what I think right.' He was leaning on my arm to get into the carriage: 'Put up the step, and shut the door,' said he, in a huff. I took my place on the box, by the coachman. We drove to the church in a most Christian disposition. My master, as he alighted at the door, took care that his eye did not meet mine: his lady was holding by his arm. On purpose to teaze him, I said, 'Begging your honour's pardon, you will please to walk separate from my mistress: if you go into the church in that way, it will be known that you never were in a real church before in your lives.' 'What, not man and wife together, you ——' blockhead, I believe, he was going to say. 'No, your honour, nor brother and sister,' said I, looking at the son and daughter. By that time, the next carriage had set down: the beadle at the door cried out *Non affollate!* I went into the church before the masters, to wait on them to their seats, took holy-water, and made a genuflexion: my master stumbled over my leg. I rose and pointed to the vase: they did not know what to do, looked confused, and followed me to their places: when they had kneeled or seated themselves, I do not know which, I made another genuflexion to the altar, and retired among the *gente di servitù.*"

"And how did your party behave?" Bryan asked; "could you see them from your place?"

"Yes; I saw my mistress in the act of whispering to her daughter, and a lady turning round to them, and motioning to them to be silent. My master looked back and caught my eye, and seemed contented to have some one near who might help him in need. However, they sat, and stood up, and kneeled, like other people; except that, at the elevation, my master was as fixed on his seat as if he had been impaled, and the young gentleman was leaning his head aside, and casting a lackadaisical look to the inclosure, where the royal family was or was not. At the end of the mass, I conducted my family out of the church, with all due ceremony on my part, and to their carriage. We drove along the Chiaja: my young master, as I must call him, though he was a year or two older than me, touched my elbow, as I sat on the box, 'David, tell the coachman to drive to the grotto of Pous Lippo' (so he pronounced it). I gave the order, asking at the same time, where is the tomb of Virgil? '*Qua su*,' said the coachman. I looked up to the left hand where he pointed with his whip, and fell into a state of classical delirium. I was roused by the cries of the young lady: she was alarmed by the darkness of the grotto: a little time was lost by her mother in an attempt to encourage her; a little time in telling me to order the coachman to turn back; and a little time in translating the order to him: meanwhile he had proceeded, and, on understanding from me what was required, with a sarcastic smile, answered, *Non si puo*, and went on at a gentle trot, bidding me tell the young lady that her lover waited for her at the other end. 'What does he say, David?' He says, miss, that there is not room to turn the horses, and that he must go to the end. When arrived there, the young lady protested against ever again entering such a horrible cavern; a grotto indeed! a dungeon. At length, being informed through me, the interpreter, that there was no other way of returning to Naples, but by a circuit of several miles, and seeing no one present before whom it was worth while to make herself interesting, she submitted; declaring only that she would keep her eyes shut while we were in that dreadful hole."

"I hope the young lady emerged safely?"

"Yes, sir; and they immerged into the Villa Reale, to

hear the military band—very wicked on Sunday in England. I was obliged to wait half an hour at the gate, and I judged by my master's looks that he enjoyed my vexation, as a set-off against the advantage of having been more at home than himself in the church of San Ferdinando."

"The most atrocious tyranny and the most petty malice are found together in the English treatment of our country and our countrymen," said Bryan: "and they condescend to indulge the latter when the former fails them."

"'And the fools, to have their prayers in Latin!' said my master, as I waited at table," resumed Morgan: "'to be sure, I would not have understood them in Italian: but there would have been some sense in that.' 'Parliament,' said I, 'ordered them in English for Ireland, where it was no more understood than here at Naples; and it would suit your honour best.'—'It will suit me best for you to leave my house to-morrow,' said my master; his power to punish me turning his rage into self-complacency. 'When your honour pleases,' said I; and we were both of us sulky for the rest of the dinner-time. I was grievously vexed, however," continued Morgan; "it was only the second day after our arrival from Rome. I had seen nothing of Naples or its environs. I had no funds to enable me to remain there. I went the next morning into the Villa Reale, being neither a dog nor a servant in livery: it was early; I was alone at the point that gives a view of the bay; I looked round me, and fairly burst into a flood of tears; it was very silly of me, but I was only two-and-twenty."

"That must be your excuse for having entered into controversy," said Mr. Harrison.

"Nay, surely, sir, I was not to hear such insults without"—

"Nay, Mr. Morgan; you seem conscious that you were rather impelled by resentment than induced by charity."

"You may be right: but at the time, I thought myself a martyr for the faith."

"You were ill-treated, and asserted your own cause and that of the true faith at the same time: but for the

sake of your own triumph, not for that of truth. But human passions are excited by human motives: you were oppressed by power, and resisted not blameably, but you can hardly say meritoriously."

"I made much ado about nothing," said Morgan; "for, when I presented myself to ask for my discharge, my master bid me say no more of the matter, but get ready to go with them to Pompeii. The very name made me forget all that had passed: and we were soon in the street of the tombs. A town buried under the ashes of a volcanic eruption, the sight of what had been removed after so many centuries, the heaps that still cover beings once angered or pleased like ourselves, made me for a time forgive ascendancy."

"While I was thus absorbed," Morgan continued, being encouraged by the evident pleasure with which Mr. Harrison listened to his shrewd and sarcastic remarks, "while I was thus absorbed, the elder gentleman came up to me. 'David,' he said, 'when did this eruption happen?'—'In the year '79, sir,' I answered. 'Oh, 1579; let me see: how many years ago?'—I charitably forbore to mortify by correcting him. I did not even laugh, but assented by a servile bow—looking as complaisant as a Frenchman when he hears the blunders of an English practitioner in his language. The footman, a fellow-servant, had given me a lesson before I set off: 'Davy,' he said, 'if you cannot keep your temper and a civil tongue in your head, better not put your courier's dress on again.' I followed his advice, and marshalled my feelings to entire indifference."

"It is strange," remarked Mr. Harrison, "that the English should behave to their servants so much more harshly than the people of every other country. It must be occasioned by something in their religion. True piety teaches humility."

"Piety!" Morgan exclaimed: "Pish! it is their naturally cold and selfish temperament. Who has any piety except in show? You, sir, perhaps, and the O'Mearas."

"Nay, Mr. Morgan; several others," expostulated Mr. Harrison.

"No;" said Morgan: "only here and there one. For

my part, I have been so disgusted—scandalized, you will call it—by the affectation of the few and the indifference of the many, that I have drawn the conclusion that there is no truth in a religion that no one really practises."

"What mean you, Mr. Morgan?"

"Aye, I know you will be shocked at finding yourself in company with an infidel."

"It is a presumption of the truth of our faith, Morgan, that it contradicts our natural faulty propensities: all pretended religions are, more or less, in accordance with them, and thus betray their merely human origin."

"Why, you make no outcry against me, Mr. Harrison?"

"I think it better to prove the weakness of your inference, that, because we do not conform to a superhuman system of morality, therefore our faith is false in us and groundless in itself. Your master might really believe revelation, though he had not learned the humility taught by it: and what is true, is true in effect, though denied or rejected, neglected or ridiculed by man."

Morgan sat silent for a little while: he drew up his right foot to the toe, and beat the devil's tattoo: at length, "You seem to think nothing of my being damned as an infidel?" he said.

Mr. Harrison eyed him with a benevolent smile; "May I pour you out a cup of tea, Mr. Morgan?"

"Yes, do: but what say you?"

"I say nothing. I am no theologian; only a poor gentleman."

"Nonsense, sir."

"Then I will reply to you, Mr. Morgan, what the Prince de Ligne, after several conversations of this sort with Frederic II. of Prussia, said of him: 'Il aime trop sa damnation'—he is too proud of being damned."

"He meant to say as I do," answered Morgan, "that it is very presumptuous in priests to threaten in this way all who doubt their story."

"They cannot help it, Morgan. It is evident that the benefit of salvation cannot be offered equally both to those who receive and to those who reject the terms."

"And, pray, what right have they to make terms?"

"They do not make them: you assume that their teaching is false, if you say that the terms are theirs. As

for infidelity, Mr. Morgan, I can only say, 'Il y a des grands exemples pour, et des grandes autorités contre.'"

"What authorities?"

"The Catholic Church of seventeen centuries: the Jews for two thousand years before the Church: and the Patriarchs before them to the time of Abel, who offered a bloody sacrifice, anticipating that of Calvary."

"Abel! O, aye," said Morgan, "he was the second son of the first woman, made of a rib of the first man! Is it possible, my dear sir, that you can believe such childish stories?"

"Mr. Morgan," returned Mr. Harrison, steadily yet kindly regarding him, "you consider the Jewish account of the origin of the human race to be a silly invention: will you be pleased to invent a wise, a rational, a probable account?"

"Nay, that is no affair of mine: only tell me, why could not Madam Eve be formed of the dust of the earth, like her husband?"

"And I will ask," said Mr. Harrison, "why is not the earth endued with a prolific power to produce human and all other living animals? We should not wonder at such a mode, were we accustomed to it. Or, why were not the brute animals renewed after the deluge by a new creation, rather than continued in the ark?"

"More strange stories!" cried Morgan.

"True, my young friend; yet it seems that the author of them relied on the credulity of his own people. But could he expect that his stories would be confirmed by the discoveries of a philosophical age, as they have been?"

"It seems likely, I allow," said Morgan, "that a sort of universal inundation has at some time happened, but I cannot swallow the ark."

"It was not made to be swallowed," said Mr. Harrison, "but to shew that ordinary and extraordinary exertions of power are equally easy to Omnipotence."

"Oh, you may do any thing by the help of Omnipotence," Morgan replied in a jeering tone.

"You do not, then, believe in a Creator—a God?"

"Not I; if there is one, he ought to be a good Being, which it is plain, from the evil and suffering endured on earth, he is not."

"How do you account, then, for the existence of what exists?"

"How do you account for the existence of your God? *You* suppose an uncaused cause: *I* suppose an uncaused effect."

"I admit the difficulty on either side to be equal," replied Mr. Harrison.

"Do you? Then you are the honestest man, and the fairest arguer I ever met with. I expected to be cried down as an atheist: but perhaps you will not take that liberty with a stranger. But say whatever you like, sir: I shall be obliged to you, and I trust you. I would not tell my thoughts to any other man; let alone a woman."

"I will venture, Mr. Morgan, on any terms compatible with Christian charity," replied Mr. Harrison, "I tell you, that you reason ill when, in your choice between two difficulties, you incline to the solution that does not account for the design and intelligence displayed in creation."

"Creation! By that word you beg the question."

"Be it nature, then."

"I will tell you why I so incline," said Morgan. "If there was a God, he would be perfect: there is nothing to hinder him from being so. He would exercise the omnipotence you attribute to him for ends consistent with wisdom and goodness. Such would be the expectation of a reasonable man like yourself. Do you find this expectation realized when you look on nature and human life?"

"Not as yet, Morgan: but this present is not our only state of existence."

"It is the only life of brutes, at all events; and pray, why are brutes to be tortured in being food for one another and for man, the most carnivorous animal of them all? Why are they subjected to diseases, and, if they escape being devoured, to old age and death? All this suffering is gratuitous; for they can have no future compensation; and they want no moral discipline in this life to prepare them for a life to come, not destined for them."

"It is an enigma, Morgan; revelation has not solved it for us: but it does not regard us."

"Indeed, but it does: for if the Supreme Being thus treats brutes, what ground have we to flatter ourselves that he is more considerate in our regard?"

"We have the moral sense, Mr. Morgan, which the brutes have not: we are, therefore, accountable beings: we are capable of knowing that there is a Supreme Being,"—

Morgan interrupted,—"that is, of doubting whether there is one or not."

"Then it is but a doubt with you," Mr. Harrison rejoined.

"Why, there may be a God, after all," Morgan answered, hesitatingly; "and I incline to think that the sense of right and wrong implanted in us is a proof of a moral, and therefore, an intelligent Creator: yet this notion of justice may have been conceived and gradually extended and adopted as most convenient in the affairs of life."

"Nay, but observe it well, Mr. Morgan: it subsists independently of reasoning; it is intuitive. The feeling of benevolence, so strong in yourself, is it the product of fortuitous combination, of a blind, insensible agency?"

Morgan was silent for some time. At length he said, in a tone of soliloquy,—

"The question is, whether the cause of all be an agency, blind, natural, necessary,—or intelligent, spontaneous, discriminating. An intelligent cause is God. If this Creator had chosen for me to believe in him, he would have given me proof of his being."

"He has given you your own being, Morgan, as a proof of his. Did you make yourself? Or can unconsciousness produce consciousness?"

"Why not? How else came your God Almighty into being?"

"He was not produced: he exists from eternity; in infinitude;—terms that we must use, though we cannot comprehend them: for neither can we, even in imagination, suppose to ourselves the beginning of time, nor the limit of space."

"I am not bound to believe what I cannot understand."

"Indeed, but you are, Mr. Morgan, if your disbelief

reduces you to an absurdity; that is, if you cannot deny the incomprehensible without admitting the impossible or the contradictory."

"As how, Mr. Harrison?"

"Design without a designer; adaptation of means to ends without intelligence: this you must suppose, if you deny a creative Supreme Being. While, at the same time, you escape from the admission of one self-produced, underived Consciousness, by asserting the same phenomenon on the occasion of the birth of every insect that crawls."

Morgan seemed to be struck by this argument.

"May I tell you," Mr. Harrison continued, "why you deny or doubt the existence of a Deity? Will you be offended if I use a harsh word?"

"No; do your worst," said the other, laughing.

"Then I quote, 'The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God.'"

"It is easy to apply foul language; but that is not reasoning."

"Nay, I quote for the purpose of begging you observe what I think worthy of remark; it is not said that the fool has drawn this inference from his understanding, but from his heart: his will has inclined him to form this conclusion; he has some motive"—

"What motive can I have?"

"None: you give up your best friend. But there may have been, in some of those who invented or adopted atheism, two thousand years ago, during the prevalence of an absurd polytheism,—there may have been a leaning to independence, to irresponsibility, to the vanity of setting themselves above the vulgar; at least, I can detect such workings in the hearts of the fools of the present day; and you must admit, sir, that they are, indeed, fools, if such a bias induces them to forego the use of a fair judgment in such a question."

"I take all you have said in good part, Mr. Harrison; and I thank you for arguing the question with me. Before you, I would not appear in false colours; though I am a hypocrite to every one else."

"It may be prudent for you to conceal your opinions," said Mr. Harrison; "they would distress your Catholic

friends; and the Protestants are zealous for what they retain of Christianity, that they may have a right to persecute and hate Papists, and secure their own domination: but how do you keep your secret throughout the year?"

"I know to what you refer," replied Morgan. "I make a visit every Easter to my father's brother at Limerick. The French *noblesse* before the Revolution, that is, the *philosophes* among them, used to pass one half of the *quinzaine de Pâques* in the country, the other half in Paris; and it was charitably taken for granted that they did their Paschal duty: but that was neither here nor there, as the M.P. said of his land."

"I am sorry you should be compelled to such conformity with popular opinion."

"Why you would not have me declare myself to the world as what you call an atheist?"

"Indeed, but I would it were possible without inconvenience to yourself; for, I think, that if you atheists were known, and, instead of being assailed with reproaches, were to be reasoned with and pitied"—

"Pity!—aye, that is your insolence. Why do you pity us?"

"For the loss of man's best friend. But I would reason with you also, and shew you that your opinion is the less probable alternative between an uncaused cause and uncaused effects, and that the credit you take for courage, in braving the Supreme Being, rests on a supposition contrary to your opinion: for if there be no God, whom have you to brave?"

Morgan's countenance fell.

"It is very true, sir," he said, "that we thought ourselves fine fellows in defying God, while we denied that there was one at all: we took to ourselves a glory that did not belong to us, if our conviction was entire. But still," he added, recovering himself; "men deserve some praise for being wiser than their fellow men, who are grovelling under superstitious and baseless fears."

"We have a basis, Morgan, for our belief. That basis is Creation—the Universe. The architect of St. Paul's church is buried under the dome: 'Si quæris monumentum, circumspice,'—Ye, who ask for his monument, look round,—is inscribed. The faults *you* may find in

the work, may suggest doubts of the wisdom of the architect; but in regard to the Divine designer, we know but a part of his plan. Revelation even tells us no more than is absolutely necessary for us to know; and we should not let that which we do not know supersede that which we do."

"What does it tell," cried Morgan, "but a story of a very excellent man, whom his followers have deified after the Pagan mode? he was a wise man, but"—

"But we wanted something more than wisdom," said Mr. Harrison. "We wanted remission of sin: this the Divine justice could not grant without an atonement."

"Why were sinful beings called into existence?"

"They were not sinful when they came from the hands of their Creator."

"Why did he permit them to sin?"

"Would you have him deprive them of free will?"

"True; and so they eat the apple: but what is that to me? I was not there."

"Depend on it you were there. Your soul, before it animated your body, fell from its original rectitude by some act of which the eating of the forbidden fruit is a representation and a repetition. Your soul betrayed, even in your infancy, propensities that must have been contracted by a depraved indulgence of the will; and, as you grew up, a resistance to good, that proved your nature to be no longer that which an all-perfect Being had given to you."

"I like hearing you talk, sir, better than a sermon," said Morgan, smiling uneasily; "one may contradict you, and question you. You have a pretty way of eking out a story to make all fair. You see it would be unfair for me to suffer on account of the apple; so you invent the notion that I sinned before I was born."

"Yes; yourself and the whole human race: all who have been born, or are to be born into this world. That the souls of all hereafter to be born are now in existence, is not so extravagant a supposition as the one unconsciously adopted by unreflecting people, that their being depends on accidental combinations of circumstances, which control the will of 'the God of the spirits of all flesh.'"

"You have made out your Christian story," said Mor-

gan, "to be more plausible than I thought it." He sat drumming with his tea-spoon against the side of the cup. Then setting it down and taking up the candle, which he snuffed with his fingers, he added: "If you have the charity, as I dare say you will have, to try to convince me of the truth of this story, I will not object to it on account of its being a miraculous one; for the being of a God once allowed, every thing and nothing is a miracle. If, indeed, nature and necessity have given origin to every thing"——

"What is the origin of nature and necessity?" Mr. Harrison interrupted.

"Excuse me, sir; then it is necessary for nature to follow her course: but God may alter his on sufficient reason; and to teach men truths necessary to their restoration to virtue and happiness, is a sufficient reason for doing what may prove that it is He who speaks."

Mr. Harrison kindly took Morgan by the hand, and said, "I have observed, sir, that they who pass for reasonable people hardly ever reason; and that they who do reason, are hardly ever reasonable. You have the faculty of reason, and the will to be governed by it. The first great step is to believe in a God. An atheist is further from a theist than a theist is from Christianity. To an atheist, all things are impossible. He is subject to nature and necessity, as much as if he were mere organized matter. But a theist recognizing the moral sense, and believing it to be, what, in fact, it is, a revelation of the Divine will, sanctioned by reward or pain hereafter to be looked for, without which it would be nugatory,—a theist thus far convinced, and conforming his life to the moral sense, may hope for the Divine help to lead him to all truth, or for pardon of his error."

"In answer to your insinuation," replied Morgan, "I observe that theists are to the full as good moralists as Christians; and that I am not detained in what you call error, by any fear of being obliged to be a better man than I now am."

"You are in the right, Mr. Morgan: you would not be obliged to be a better man as a believer than you are as an unbeliever; but you would be more obliged to be a good man. The stronger motives to goodness, supplied by

our faith, have had and still have their influence. There have been and are Christians, whose virtue has reached a height and perfection to which the most virtuous philosophers have not attained."

"It may be so: to what is this owing?"

"To the renunciation of himself on the part of the Christian. His virtue is not his own, but God's. The philosopher hopes that his virtue is accepted for its own value: the Christian's merit is united to that of the Redeemer. The philosopher wills to be good: the Christian knows that it is God who giveth him both to will and to do according to His good pleasure."

CHAPTER XXXIV.

Mr. Harrison rose from table as he spoke, and the three sauntered out into a little garden in front of Bryan O'Meara's habitation. Morgan, after awhile, resumed the conversation, but it was in a more subdued and respectful tone than he had at first evinced.

"I suppose," he said, "if our first parents, as you call them, had not sinned, all the world would have been a garden by this time. But why did the Almighty create them if he knew beforehand that they would sin? I must recur to this great question."

"He foreknew this, doubtless, Mr. Morgan; but the mercy of God is manifest, beyond a doubt, in our redemption. The will of man was free, that his obedience might be meritorious: he abused his will and fell into sin."

"But we have not sinned," said Morgan; "we that have been since born, condemned to toil on an accursed earth till death. Where is the justice of sentencing us for a fault not our own?"

"I suspect," replied Mr. Harrison, "I suspect, as I before said, that the fault has been ours also; that all since born have shared it. We find good dispositions in our nature, but we find evil also: these were not im-

planted by our Creator, for He is not the author of evil. We may reconcile His sentence with justice, by supposing that, in a former state of being, we sinned as Adam did, and are now born into this world to avail ourselves of the great atonement."

"Do you seriously think it possible that our souls lived before they came into these bodies of ours?"

"I do; and that they sinned in a way resembling the sin of Adam;—a sin of curiosity, and sensuality, and vanity,—of excessive love of what is pleasing to the eye by external appearance."

"But this is no part of your faith?" asked Morgan.

"True: it would have been of no use to reveal it to us, since the memory of a former state has been taken away by imprisoning the soul where it remembers only what is impressed on the brain. How discontented and miserable we should be, if our thoughts could go back into a state where we were, as we shall again be after death! The goodness of God has kept back from us this knowledge; while He has told us enough for the accomplishment of our salvation: and I again caution believers not to let that which we do not know supersede that which we do know!"

"Why, it is as easy to believe," said Morgan, "that our souls lived before they came into these bodies, as that they will live after they go out of them at death: but when the Almighty put the souls of your Adam and Eve into bodies like ours, He knew that they would sin over again a sin of the same sort as they had sinned already. Why did He give them this opportunity?"

"All the difficulty of understanding this question," answered Mr. Harrison, "arises from the impossibility of reconciling the foreknowledge of God, and the free will of man, with the wisdom of permitting the abuse of that free will. God foreknew the fall of those whom we call the devils; yet He created them: we are not told why; this does not concern us. He placed our first parents in Paradise, and gave them a command which He knew they would violate: but in this, instead of tempting them to sin, He prepared the mercy of redemption for them, and for all since born."

"What!" said Morgan, "when the seed of the woman

was promised that was to bruise the serpent's head? but the sin of the devils,—why was it too great for this mercy?"

"We must suppose," replied Mr. Harrison, "that their offence so far alienated them from God, that they became incapable of a motive of love whereby to repent: such will be the state of human souls that have their portion with fallen angels in another life; they will hate their sins on account of the consequences, but not from a love of the divine perfections; and, as the spiritual life of every rational being must depend on the divine grace, and as God will have withdrawn Himself, they will be left to despair and to the pain of loss, as our theologians have termed the great torment of the finally reprobate."

"I can think of but one way," interposed Bryan, "of excusing the Almighty Father, if I may dare to say that word, for creating beings that were to be eternally miserable,—He could not help it."

"What mean you, Bryan?"

"I hardly know myself what I mean. I am afraid I am too bold; yet, I would rather cut off my right hand than promulgate any thing wicked. But we cannot deny that God could not help being God."

"True: He exists by the necessity of His own divine nature."

"Well, then, by the same necessity other natures may have come into being"

"Not independently of God?" Mr. Harrison asked with emotion; "not whether He willed or not?"

"I cannot say: I do not know what to think. They came into being by the power of God; but could it be His will that there should be any good for nothing but to be damned at last?"

"That question has perplexed many, I will not say wiser, but more learned, heads than ours," Mr. Harrison replied: "learning will not help us to answer it. It is not answered by saying, as some have said, that God proposed the greatest possible sum of happiness; and that He would not refuse to create intelligent free agents, because some of them would abuse their free will: for, unless we suppose, as you do, a necessary emanation of intelligence from the divine nature, the Almighty might

have limited His creation to those who would be faithful to their duty: nor is it answered by denying free will."

"Nay," cried Morgan, "that would make the matter still worse for you: it would make God the author of sin."

"And to deny His prescience or foreknowledge," said Mr. Harrison, "would be to deny the infinite perfection of His nature, and make of Him a being acting on probabilities, like ourselves. We know that Christ hath loved us, and delivered himself for us: let that suffice."

They rested a little while in meditation on this most holy mystery.

"Still," said Morgan, "I cannot see how God can foreknow an act that a man is free to do or not to do: if the act is foreknown, it is certain—if it is certain, the will is not free."

"Let us explain one difficulty by another," said Mr. Harrison. "All time is present time to God. The angels give glory to Him 'who was, and is, and is to come:' they speak of what is attributable to Him alone. But this might be said of a mere mortal in a sense that we can understand: it must be inferred, therefore, that it is said of God in a sense that our faculties cannot apprehend. He calls Himself 'I AM.' The angel descends in the Vision of St. John, and swears by Him who liveth for ever and ever, that there shall be time no longer. If there be no succession of time in the existence of God, all things must be present, and by consequence known to Him."

"We must wait till after death to understand this," muttered young Morgan.

"We must, my friend; nevertheless, we can think of distant places without passing through space even in thought: we can recall the past, or grasp at the future, without being delayed by a progress through intermediate time."

"True," said Morgan, "but we cannot at the same moment think on the past and on the future, nor carry our mind to the north and to the south."

Mr. Harrison replied, "Our faculties but faintly image to us the Divine perfection; yet we are created after His image, and"——

"There is but one thing that God cannot do," said O'Meara, interrupting him, "He cannot make a being equal to Himself; there is but one thing that He will not do in our regard—He will not be unjust; nay, what is more. He loves mercy, and has died for us. But without being unjust He may be merciful. that is the meaning of our faith and hope."

"I will think again on the matter," exclaimed the young farmer in a tone of sadness, while he extended his hand to O'Meara. "The hour is getting late, and I fear that I have fatigued your friend after his journey. But I am obliged to you, sir," he added to Mr. Harrison, "for discussing this matter with me; and I will strive to turn your arguments to account."

"Do so, my friend," answered Mr. Harrison, kindly shaking him by the hand: "do so, and the grace of God will assist you."

Morgan slowly retraced his steps through the increasing darkness, and the two friends silently watched his receding figure. For a quarter of an hour longer, they lingered in the garden, and marked the rising of the harvest moon; then, as it clomb into the blue vault of heaven, they returned to the tower: and O'Meara conducting his friend to a room which he had fitted up for him, with unusual neatness. took an affectionate leave of him for the night.

We will not pause to investigate how tumultuary were the feelings of our hero now that he was left alone after this eventful day. Eventful, he felt it to be; for had not his protector's announcement of his kind intentions towards him secured to him, at length, his reinstatement in that class of society which his education and habits had fitted him to adorn? More, far more: had it not qualified him to pretend to the hand of her whom he seemed to himself to love the more from having deemed her so long lost to his hopes? It was, indeed, true, as Mr. Harrison had hinted, that the Denham family might still consider his position in the world as inferior to hers: but his benefactor knew not, at the time, of his own more extended hopes - of his certain claims, as he deemed them, upon the wide domains of Westbury. Could these hopes be delusive? could these claims be overruled? As yet, he had not consulted any one upon the subject. To-

morrow he would shew the parchments to his friend: to-morrow he would hear his opinion. Would that morrow never arrive?

Even to the anxious and to the wretched, the hours of night wear away. At length, morning dawned; and after a cheerful but homely breakfast—after a visit from Bridget O'Meara to the protector of her early widowhood, which was creditable to the feelings of all three—Mr. Harrison inquired the meaning of those excited assurances of wider prospects which he had refused to listen to on the preceding evening. Eagerly, but with a trembling voice, Bryan commenced his narrative: he told of his first unauthorized visit to the house of his ancestors; of the week that he had spent upon the domain, disguised as one of the labourers of the nurseryman; of the service he had rendered the present proprietor; of the gratitude of the latter, and of his offer to make some compromise—some allowance out of the lands to which he had asserted a title that force alone could, as he then thought, make good. Then came the account of his visit, as an invited guest, to the house; of his examination of the burial-place of his fathers. At length the parchments were produced; and with feverish earnestness he paced the floor, while he desired Mr. Harrison to peruse them, and to pronounce his fate.

The anxiety of his young friend only made his patron more carefully study the document ere he would countenance hopes that might prove delusive. Again and again he perused the deeds: then extended his hands frankly and joyously to our hero, and exclaimed, "My dear boy, I congratulate you. God gives you greater means of advancing His glory, and the good of your neighbours."

"And, believe me, although I am so eager on my own account," said Bryan, "believe me that I am not unmindful of the further duties that success will impose upon me. No; Heaven be my witness, that I only look upon wealth as a means to the noble end to which you destine it. But think you my claim good—certain?"

"As far as I can judge, it is so. But great expense may be incurred in the prosecution of it. With this, I charge myself, if the opinion of counsel, in whom I

confide, corroborates our views. But you must be patient, and await until I have an opportunity of consulting one. My tour in the country, of which you have so long boasted to me, must not be so suddenly cut short," he playfully added. 'I must see something of this 'iligant jewel' of an island, and of its honest suffering people. You will have preparations to make for leaving even this aspiring tower, and for taking your place in England as my adopted son: unless, indeed, your greater anticipations lead you to spurn, at once, the contracted acres of Willoughby. Nay—nay," he continued, while he checked the grateful protestations with which his young friend was about to meet his sally, "nay, do not say a word about it. I see that, like the bishop of Bath and Wells, you would prefer possessing both. At all events, recollect that 'a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.'"

It may well be supposed that Bryan O'Meara cheerfully acceded to all these proposals of his honoured friend; and now that his own view of the valued parchments was supported by one in whose judgment he confided, he at once resumed his usual serenity of manner, and calmly abandoned the event to the award of an all-wise Providence.

Together they travelled through the island; and for some weeks, they together speculated upon the varied beauties and miseries of that ill-starred land. The feverish and excited state of the people was not, however, such as to lure strangers to remain long in any place. The spirit of resistance to the rule of the Orange party, which then oppressed the country, had, as we have said, waxed more intense and determined since the first secret meeting which Bryan had attended soon after his arrival from England. Organized bands now regularly gathered together in every district, and defied even the rigours of the martial law which had been proclaimed in almost every county. O'Meara well knew the rebellious spirit of his own neighbourhood; and was, at heart, too good a patriot not to be anxious to return and prevent any partial rising, which, he well knew, could have no other effect than the destruction of all who should take part in it. Even if the liberties of his country were to be secured

by force, still, he deemed that the time was not yet come when that force could be successfully employed.

They had left Roscommon on their road homewards, and Bryan had planned to surprise his friend by leading him in front of the spreading grounds of Westbury before he told him to whom the aspiring mansion belonged, when their minds were shocked by rumours, which came thick and three-fold upon them, of a tithe affray, attended by loss of life, which had taken place on the preceding evening. Our hero readily remembered the angry feelings of the peasantry of Westbury, and the manner in which they had heretofore gathered around him and proposed to attack the house of Mr. James; and he requested Mr. Harrison to put spurs to his horse, and to hasten forwards, that they might obtain all the details of an event which was more particularly recommended to his interest, by the locality on which it had occurred. They rode on: and a couple of miles before they reached Westbury, O'Meara suddenly checked his horse beside a cottager's garden.

"This is the house of a relative of mine," he said to Mr. Harrison; "of a son of old Logan, the woodman, whose misfortune I have related to you. Here we shall learn all particulars of this new disaster. "Ho! Philip," he cried to a labourer who was digging potatoes in his garden: "how are you and all our friends? Tell me what I am to believe of all I hear."

The young peasant stretched out his hand and fervently shook that of O'Meara; but his manner was sad, and he did not reply to the eager interrogatory of his cousin.

"Never fear the English gentleman," continued Bryan, thinking that his silence might be occasioned by the presence of a stranger; "he is the best friend I have, and a true friend to Ireland. I answer for him. And now tell me, were you at this tithe meeting?"

"I was, Mr. O'Meara."

Silence followed.

"Nay, but tell me how it happened."

"I have nothing to tell you," replied Philip Logan; "I know not how it happened."

"Did the people make use of force?" asked Bryan.

"We used all our force to run away when we saw Squire James bringing down the cavalry upon us, and were afraid they meant to charge. And when the thousands of us that were gathered together to watch the auction of widow Dermot's cow and pig by the tithe owner, began to break and scatter, they did charge; and the infantry that was drawn up to guard the auctioneer fired on us also."

He again rested on his spade in silence.

"Good heavens, Philip!" exclaimed O'Meara; "were any of your own family hurt?"

"Sure, I thought you knew it all!" resumed the cottager. "Hurt, in troth were we! My brother Edward and I were running away, side by side, over a little hillock: as we got to the top, he gave a sort of a jump, as I thought, and stumbled forwards. 'By the powers!' he said, 'I thought they had hit me! but they have not;' and while he spoke, he fell down dead at my feet."

The speaker's voice trembled and his eyes filled with tears while he put his finger at the back of Bryan's hat, and added, "just there: the bullet went into his head."

"And your poor father, Philip?"

"He had gone round, a few yards off, at the bottom of the hill: 'Oh, Phil,' cries he, coming up to me, 'I have had a bad sabre cut from my shoulder to my hip: but it is nothing to the stroke of the axe that slew my poor boy.' I saw the blood spurting out of his shoe as he walked. I pointed to Edward: I could not speak. My father looked at the body. 'Is he shot!' he cried, and his eyes seemed as if they would start out of his head. He did not wait for me to answer, but sat down by Edward's side. I kneeled on the other side. We raised him up a little: we knew it was of no use, but we could not help doing so. The head and arms fell backwards: that startled us, and we laid it down again. After a little while, my father said 'He must be taken home, the dear child! I can lie in the same cart: I cannot walk, wounded as I am. Holy Virgin! but I am very faint: and I think the hour is coming that I have prayed for ever since I handled that unlucky axe. Go to that farm, Phil, and borrow a cart.' Well, there was no more firing among the soldiers," continued the narrator, "and as I

went to the farm, I met the cavalry coming back in their ranks. Squire James was riding by the side of the commanding-officer: he'll have cause to remember his morning's work! They all let me pass, however; and I got a one-horse cart, and two men to help me. We lifted poor Edward in: as we lifted up my father, he gave a groan, struggled a little, and breathed his last breath."

"Horrible!" exclaimed Mr. Harrison and O'Meara at the same time. "But surely, my friend," added the former, "some provocation must have been given by the mob?"

"Not at all, your honour," answered Philip Logan. "Never a bit of reason had they for laying about them as they did. When the soldiers from Athlone first came up, the people were going to run away, only farmer Morgan jumped upon a bank and called to them to stand where they were, for that it was a public auction, and they had a right to look on and see who would have the courage to buy the widow's cow for the tithe proctor: and then the people cheered, and two little boys began to throw potatoe-berries at the military."

"Are you quite certain that nothing else was done or said to provoke this brutal attack?"

"Sure am I, your honour, for I stood near farmer Morgan all the time, and heard every word he said. And now the Sassenach devils have gone and taken him a prisoner, and have carried him to the barracks at Athlone, where he is to be hung for exciting the people to riot and rebellion, as they call it. But wait a bit, Squire James, wait a bit, and see if Captain Rock forgets that it was you who sent for the cavalry."

These last words were uttered with more of fierceness than of sorrow; and the speaker started as a voice, from the other side of the garden, where it was bounded by a cross-lane, exclaimed "Hollo, Philip Logan, hollo! What do you mean by taking up your crop before I have taken the tithe? It is a robbery of every tenth potatoe."

"Sure, and it's just as you say: that is exactly what it is," answered the cottager, turning round to the speaker, who was on horseback, and, in semblance, half farmer—half shopman.

"I ask you," said the proctor, not choosing to note the new application of his words by Philip: "I ask you why you did not give me notice before you began to dig?"

"I only take up a few that my wife and I may have something to eat. We have nothing else to live on."

"You might live by your work, instead of idling at rebellious tithe meetings," retorted the proctor. "However, do not take up more than you want, day by day; and I dare say Squire James will let you off for a small payment in money for what you take before the crop is ripe."

"Philip, this is sad news," said O'Meara, as the other rode away; "and I sincerely grieve with you for your misfortunes. I will return as soon as possible and see what is to be done: but I must not now delay a moment, when every moment may be of importance to poor Morgan. Tell my aunt how much I grieve for her."

But the application which Bryan O'Meara and Mr. Harrison made to the officer in command at Athlone, retarded not, for one second, the fate of the unhappy prisoner. They were answered, that the person for whom they interested themselves had been seen to address the multitude which had congregated at the auction: that the object of that unusual gathering had been to overawe those who were charged with the execution of the law: that Mr. James of Westbury had conveyed to the barracks sure intelligence that the meeting was to have been the commencement of a rising throughout the district: that it was necessary to strike terror into the rebels: and finally, it was politely intimated to Mr. Harrison that his friend, O'Meara, was not so favourably viewed by the Government that his prayer for another should have particular weight. "You, sir," the officer added in conclusion, "are a stranger, and may not be aware that we consider few men more dangerous than the one who now accompanies you. This Morgan was condemned by a court-martial, and must abide his doom."

An hour before dawn on the following morning, Father Larkin stood at the gate of the fort of Athlone. He was conducted, by the sentinel, to David Morgan's dungeon, and there locked up with him alone.

"I will not deceive you, father,"—thus Morgan replied

to exhortations suited to his condition; "I will not die in hypocrisy. I do not believe in revelation. Had I seen more of Bryan O'Meara and his friend, it might have been otherwise; I believe that my judgment would have been convinced. As it was, they only shewed to me the absurdities of atheism: further arguments might have given me faith in revelation. We have not now time—it is too late to argue. I must rely on the goodness of the great Creator, in whom I have lately learned to believe. I believe Him also to be good: but His creation is spoiled by the malice of men. I am going to know why He permits this perversion of His benevolence."

"He permits it in hope, dear brother," replied the priest. "Do not renounce the hope with the means."

"It is worthy of your amiable mind, father, not to spurn an infidel," sighed the condemned man.

"It is the dictate of charity that I follow, my unhappy friend," answered Father Larkin; "the affliction of a stranger would have a right to my compassion: let me serve you in all I can."

For some short space, Morgan summoned force to resist the appeal to his sensibility made by the gentleness of Larkin.

"Leave me, father," at length he said. "I am not worthy of your care. You see, I reject it. Do not stay in this horrid place."

"I will not leave you, Morgan," replied the priest. "I have, indeed, been admitted here in my character of priest; I will stay in that of friend. You can now have no other with you."

"I need not desire a better," answered the unhappy man. "And on the law of nature, written on the hearts of us both, you may advise and encourage me."

"May the Almighty find your error to be venial!" the father exclaimed. "May He find in you purity of intention, and that desire, in all past time, to promote His glory, which is the duty of all who believe in Him."

"On that head, father, I fear that I have much to reproach myself: for I long prided myself on disbelief even of the existence of an Almighty Creator. Mr. Harrison, however, shewed me the absurdity and in-

superable difficulties of atheism. I am now a theist; but I am my own confessor and penitent."

"But do you not think my prayers may avail you?" asked the priest.

"Yes: it seems likely that the Father of all may be well pleased that His children should intercede for one another."

"Then let us join in prayer," said Larkin; "in prayer which is consistent with the belief and the unbelief of a theist."

This devotion ended, Larkin talked to the condemned of his family, and of Emma Beauchamp, to whom he was now avowedly attached.

"Poor dear girl!" said Morgan. "But she has found a protector. Had I lived, my prideful unbelief would have yielded to her clear judgment, and Mr. Harrison would have gladly seen us man and wife."

The guards entered; knocked off his fetters; bound his arms; and led him forth. Larkin walked by his side.

"Comfort my father and mother," said the prisoner; give my last love to Emma; and may you, father, be blessed in faith, hope, and charity."

Arrived on the platform, he looked down on the town and bridge, where thousands were assembled to witness the execution.

"Those are not men to forego justice from fear of death," he said, turning round his head. "Our good cause will prosper; and this cowardly vengeance on an unarmed man will but help it forward."

"Mount the ladder!" cried the guard.

He did so with firm steps. The multitude on the bridge preserved an awed silence, and stoodwith heads uncovered. After a short struggle, David Morgan hung a lifeless corpse.

CHAPTER XXXV.

Bryan O'Meara, with Mr. Harrison, had hastened on to Athlone immediately after hearing the sad tale of Philip Logan: and remained that night in the town—unwilling to give up all hope that the life of the prisoner might be ultimately spared. They knew nothing, therefore, of the increased violence of the popular feeling in their own neighbourhood, nor of the measure which had been already taken by the maddened peasantry to avenge themselves on Mr. James; to whose endeavour to preserve the peace of the country, they rightly attributed the arrival of the cavalry at the tithe meeting. Means, however, had been already decided on to execute the threat of Philip Logan.

A secret gathering had been held in the ruined abbey, in which Bryan had first met the conspirators; and soon after midnight, half-a-dozen men had detached themselves from it to secure the person of their intended victim, that they might hold him as a hostage for the release of Morgan, ere they wreaked their own vengeance upon him.

The fisherman of the ferry, Daly, was at the head of the small party of desperadoes who had thus undertaken to attack Westbury. It is needless to say that Philip Logan, burning to avenge the death of his father and brother, was one of his followers.

Daly scrambled over the palings of the park, and leading them past the Tower of Albert, went alone to the low wall of the garden, leaped over it, and knocked at the window of the room where, as he knew, Thomas slept

"Who is there?" cried the groom.

"Myself,—Daly: get up."

"What is the matter?"

"Do you think I would call you for nothing, at this time of night?"

Thomas had entertained a suspicion of some movement, and willing, as we have always seen, to take his share in it, dressed himself hastily, and opened the back door.

Daly rushed in; and bolting along the passage, opened the front door to his party. He then ran up-stairs and secured the door of the garret, where slept a few troopers who had remained to protect the premises in case of attack. The party then divided and stood at the door of Mr. James's chamber, on the second floor, and of one occupied by Colonel Bolton, who was visiting at Westbury, and summoned them to come forth. Ere long, Mr. James did come forth, and immediately fired a pistol without effect, as his eyes were dazzled by the sudden torchlight. A shriek from the room betrayed the fears of Mrs. James; at the same time, her woman ran halfway down the garret stairs, and then stopped in terror. Mr. James raised another pistol, which was struck from his hand; he was overpowered and held down by force.

The Colonel now came from his room.

"What is all this?" he cried.

"Only that you must please to go with us," replied Daly.

"Where?"

"Faith, you'll know that soon enough; you are our prisoners."

By this time, Mr. James was dragged down the stairs from the second floor, and his arms bound, while he struggled with rage against the force exerted on his person. The Colonel stood quietly in the midst of his guards.

"You are a young soldier, James," he said. "This is a domiciliary visit. I have paid such in my time: they are giving us back our own coin;—we must submit; they do not seem inclined to murder us."

"Your honours must see that we could do that now if we would," replied Philip Logan; "but we have orders to treat you civilly."

"Whose orders?"

"You will know all about it in time."

The promise of civil treatment, and the pistol that had been struck from his hand, and was now held to his head, prevailed on Mr. James.

"Bring me my cloak out of your mistress's room," he called out to her woman, "and tell her I will be back by breakfast-time."

The Colonel, too, put on his cloak; and the party went

down the stairs, followed by the sobs and laments of the lady's maids, and met by Thomas Logan, in the passage.

"You villain! you let them in!" cried Mr. James.

The groom was silent.

"Hark ye," said Daly to him, "let those fellows in the garret sleep till morning; do not let any one out till the ladies want them to wait at breakfast."

The party left the mansion and advanced briskly through various by-lanes, towards the ferry over the Shannon. They crossed it without discovery, and wound their way between hedges towards the village of Lea Dale. They had determined to convey their prisoners to the tower of Bryan O'Meara, because, being at some distance from Westbury, the place of their concealment would be less likely to be suspected; and because it was near enough to Athlone for them there to obtain the earliest intelligence of the fate of David Morgan. Still more had they been induced to seek the home of O'Meara, by their belief that, although absent himself, all his neighbours and kinsfolk would support their endeavours, and rise in defence of the place of the detention of the hostages, should it be discovered and attacked ere they could work their will upon them.

With his two prisoners, Daly had just reached the terrace of the dale, when a peasant came up and asked,—

"Are the hostages safe, captain?"

"What think you of that, James?" said Colonel Bolton to his fellow-prisoner.

"Such captains!" said Mr. James, scoffingly.

"True; but what do you think of the word hostages?"

Mr. James bit his lip.

They were compelled to mount the stairs to the topmost room of the tower: compulsion was necessary in regard to Mr. James.

"I would be loath to goad you with my pike," said Daly to him, "as I told you once before, when you would not go into the boat;" and Mr. James pressed upwards his indignant step. They were ushered into the observatory.

"I dared not unbind you till now, your honours," said Daly, "for fear of your making a rush; but you will hardly rush out of these windows."

They replied not.

"I leave your honours in the dark," continued the captain; "but it will soon be day. The guard, on the stairs, if you will call to them, will do any thing in reason for your convenience.

No answer was given.

No sooner was the door locked on the two prisoners, than they became sensible of their own utter helplessness. They paced up and down; then mounted on chairs, to look out of the circular windows, and saw the stars and setting moon, with the indistinct features of the distant landscape. Again they circuited the limits of their prison, as wild beasts are wont when first consigned to the menagerie. They felt chill.

"Holloa, my friend!" cried Mr. James, "cannot you let us have a few bits of turf? it is cold,—we want a fire."

"Your friend am I?" answered Philip Logan, from the outside of the door. "Who ever heard of prisoners wanting a fire?"

The Colonel now made an attempt.

"Cannot you send to our families to let them know where we are, and—"

"And then there would be a rescue. It is one of the tricks of your martial law, that people, taken up by the army, may be confined any where, if the common jail is not thought safe. We could not put you into the jail at Athlone; you keep that to put us into."

"At least, let our wives know that we are safe from harm."

"Safe?—that, your honour, is more than I will answer for," replied the sentinel sulkily.

Meanwhile, the execution of David Morgan had been hurried on somewhat before the hour at which it was expected by the multitude; and the rioters, at the tower of Lea Dale, learnt with dismay that it had already taken place, before they had settled among themselves who should proceed to the governor of Athlone, to treat for an exchange of prisoners. The fury of the mob became ungovernable on hearing that their champion (as persecution had taught them to consider him) had already died the death of a dog. Hundreds had now

collected together in the hitherto peaceful valley, and violently clamoured for the lives of the Sassenachs. Nor were violent spirits wanting to excite and urge on their fury. Daly, the fisherman, and many others, persuading themselves that they sought only the good of their country; Philip Logan and some who, like him, had lost relatives through the hasty and cowardly attack of the soldiers on an unarmed multitude, and who sought for private revenge; and some few of a more independent class, urged on the multitude with intentions as yet known to themselves only.

Amongst these, partially disguised by a black mask, farmer Tobin harangued conspicuously the peasants, who recognized one of the leaders of their secret associations, but did not recognize the ambition which prompted him thus to cast aside his usual cautious reserve: all these and others, vociferated that the time for action had arrived, and that they owed it to themselves to revenge their wrongs upon those whom justice, if not law, had delivered up to them.

Again, Daly and Philip Logan entered the upper room of the tower, and summoned the prisoners to come forth. They had heard the cries of the furious multitudes below, and had endeavoured to prepare themselves for the doom which, they well knew, awaited them. Resistance could have availed them nothing, and they descended the stairs in silence, and went out upon the grassy terrace in front of the house. A tremendous shout hailed their appearance. When it subsided, Mr. James strove to address the rioters in an impressive, but trembling voice.

"My friends and neighbours," he said, "I deeply deplore the outrage which was committed upon you at the tithe-meeting. The soldiers attacked a peaceful multitude. But the God before whom I shall shortly appear, knows that I had strictly charged them not to commence a breach of the peace. I sent for them only to prevent disturbances, which would have brought ruin upon the country."—

"He owns that he sent for them!"—"Away with him!"—"Away with him!" vociferated the infuriated rabble around.

"It is all useless, James," said Colonel Bolton to his

unhappy companion. "I will try them on another tack.—Patriots!" he cried, "I am sorry that the troopers attacked you first; it was a cowardly deed that would almost justify your rebellion: and, I promise you, the matter shall be strictly inquired into. If the English were treated so, they would rebel also!"

"Hurrah! for the brave red coat!" shouted several voices; and a reaction seemed to be working in his favour, when a shot, fired by one of the more determined of the multitude,—and so great was the tumult that it was difficult to say from what direction it was aimed,—struck full in the broad breast of the generous soldier, and smote him lifeless to the ground.

A murmur of disapprobation uprose from the crowd. Cries of "The rope!"—"The rope!"—"They should die the death of David Morgan!" were angrily spoken by many a vengeful peasant; and the guard around the remaining prisoner, composed of those who had first dragged him from Westbury, began to be jostled and pushed onwards towards a lofty elm tree which, rising behind the manse and the peaceful chapel, already bore a halter and noose dangling from one of its lower boughs. Vainly Mr. James again strove to make himself heard. His words were drowned amid the angry and discordant cries of the multitude; and he was hurried nearer and nearer to the fatal tree.

At this critical moment, a new direction was given to the feelings of the mob, by the sudden appearance of Bryan O'Meara, at the door of his tower. He had met, in the town, Mark Ryan, the plough-boy of Farmer Tobin, whom he had heretofore so much befriended: and in his delight at seeing his protector again, the boy had hastily divulged the scheme of retaliation which was to be that morning wreaked, in Lea Dale, on the person of Squire James. As his delay in Athlone could no longer avail poor Morgan, Bryan had lost not a moment in mounting his horse,—requesting Mr. Harrison to follow as soon as possible with a detachment of soldiers, in case their interference should be needed.

"After the disgrace they have incurred by their cowardly onslaught at Roscommon," he said, "they will not again soon attack an unresisting multitude. But I

hope to prevail on the people to disperse before they come up."

He now stood on the threshold of his door, and indignantly waved his arm in answer to the triumphant cheer with which the peasantry greeted his unexpected appearance amongst them.

"Cheer not me!" he scornfully exclaimed, at the full pitch of his stern and powerful voice. "Cheer not me! I want not the applause of cold-blooded murderers. I have befriended ye, hitherto; I have been proud to belong to you: I had devoted my life to labour to redress your wrongs: but I will not be the companion of murderers."

Voices of remonstrance and exculpation arose from many.

"Reason not with me!" continued the speaker indignantly; "and unless you would have me desert you to the ruin which will rightly overtake you, bring back your prisoner and deliver him instantly into my hands. On the obedience which you have sworn, I command you to do so," he added, on perceiving that some of the disguised leaders of the multitude were exciting a spirit of resistance to his exhortation. "Think not that I will not lead you on, when I see the remotest prospect of success for our cause; think not that, when I urge you to submit, I have any fears for myself. Not so; rather than see our glorious cause blasted and disgraced by a cold-blooded murder,—rather than see the ruin which this partial rising must bring down upon you, I thus expose myself to the vengeance of the tyrannous laws which we have secretly braved in the ruined abbey. Fear not: I am not going to betray ye; but for your sakes I betray myself. As grand captain in this division of the country, I call upon you to remember your oaths and to obey your chief. There are few of ye who are not enrolled; but your names shall never be betrayed by me. The tyrants may take my life if they will:—to save you all, and to save an innocent man, I declare myself the chief of our dreaded association, and, as such, I command you to deliver up your prisoner to my keeping!"

Silently, and somewhat surlily, the mob began to open its ranks for the return of the captive and his escort towards the tower. The masked subordinate leader

whom we have before recognized as Farmer Tobin, was still, however, urging those near him to persist in the bloody work, when O'Meara again exclaimed :—

"Silence, you in the mask! I know you. You know me. And, by the God in heaven, your blood shall be on your own head if you resist my commands! John Conolly, Walter, Paul, Hugh Moylan, Sawleys, Farmer Brown, go and lead Mr. James through the throng, and let all who love the O'Mearas make way for him."

The friends and relations he had named were congregated near him at the time. Forming themselves into a compact body, they easily made their way through the multitude, and received Mr. James from the hands of his persecutors. No resistance was offered to his return; and after a few anxious moments, he stood beside his preserver on the platform. With a courage and coolness which had never left him during this fearful contest, he here turned round to the multitude and said,—

"Whatever names I may have heard, and whoever I may have recognized as taking part in this affray, I pledge to you the honour of an English gentleman that I will never divulge them. And I promise you to give whatever compensation wealth can afford to those who have suffered from the unhappy onslaught at the tithe-meeting."

Cheers for Squire Westbury, mixed with groans for the soldiery, uprose from the easily-swayed multitude, in answer to this declaration.

"Go in doors, at once; go in doors," said O'Meara, in an under tone, to the grateful Englishman. "My friends," he added aloud to the throng, "I thank you for having relied on my judgment and saved yourselves from a great crime. You will never find that I fail you in the hour of need; but it is as much my duty to preserve you from your own rashness, as to direct you when you are right. And now take my advice once more, and disperse at once to your homes. A troop of soldiers is coming out from Athlone; and although they will not again disgrace themselves—at least, not just yet—by firing upon a flying mob, yet a foul murder has, I grieve to see, been committed. I knew Colonel Bolton; and I know that you have slain a noble-minded man who had your welfare at

heart:—but I also know your provocation, and I would save you from the consequences of the act. Depart, therefore, peaceably and with all speed."

Three cheers, which startled the welkin, were then given for Bryan O'Meara; and these were succeeded by three groans for the bloody troopers,—which made the horsemen and Mr. Harrison quicken their pace, as they advanced on the road from Athlone. But before they reached the dale, all the multitude which so lately filled it had slunk silently away by different paths; and nothing remained to shew where they had so lately been, but the trampled crops of potatoes and the bleeding corpse of the unfortunate Colonel Bolton.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

We will not dwell upon the events which concluded the day which had so fearfully commenced; nor upon the feelings of Mr. James, who thus found himself again rescued from death by the proud, but lowly, claimant of Westbury. His representations to the officer in command of the military detachment, easily induced him to overlook the confession of illegal practices which Bryan had made, in order to enforce his authority over the multitude.

"He tells me," continued Mr. James, "that he is about to leave Ireland immediately. Let him depart; and this indiscretion will be soon forgotten. And as I myself have had a pretty good hint this morning that a longer residence here might be dangerous, I shall return to Athlone with your party, and make all preparations for abandoning the country."

Then, after speaking aside to Mr. Harrison and Bryan, and promising, in the concluding words of the conversation, which were alone audible, to meet them, during the following week, in Dublin, he took an affectionate leave of them and rode off with the troopers.

"And now, my dear adopted son," said Mr. Harrison

cheerfully to Bryan, some days after, as they left the well-known office of a first-rate Dublin lawyer, and walked towards their hotel; "now I have but one request to make in reference to all this:—let *me* break the news to our friends at Denham. Say not a word of my intentions towards you, or of this other matter, until we have seen how they will receive you in your own character. Do you promise me this?"

"I must give any promise you may exact, my dear sir," answered Bryan. "Your kindness to me requires that I should place myself implicitly in your hands. But I own that I am averse to these surprises. The after-pleasure is not heightened by the unnecessary pain which is made to precede it."

"I agree with you in the principle," replied his friend. "But in this instance, my plan is not lightly adopted. Believe me, that it is prompted by no silly wish to exhibit my own power by assuming the character of the beneficent genius at whose bidding sorrows disappear. But our success is, at the best, very doubtful; and I consider that we shall have more chances of acceptance, if, in the first instance, you do not press your suit even as my heir. Yet I will not deny that I love to study the display of character in trying circumstances: and shall be glad to see how all parties interested will behave to you. It would be a real triumph to win Arabella from her family by your own merit only."

Bryan was still unconvinced, although his self-love was fired by the prospect last held out to him. At all events, he felt that he could not resist the request of his benefactor: and he pledged himself to conceal, at whatever cost of feeling, his altered circumstances, until Mr. Harrison himself should deem it advisable to declare them.

With pleasurable, but tranquil excitement, and with tremulous hope, the two friends crossed the sea to Liverpool, and arrived at Grantham on the fifth day after their departure from Dublin. Leaving, at the coach-office, his carpet-bag containing his wardrobe that had been laid aside for eleven months, Bryan O'Meara hastened to the house of the Abbé Piron. The good old man saw him coming and met him at the door. Trembling with joy, he led him into his parlour.

"There is but one way for me to recover my scattered spirits," he said. "I must receive you as the Carthusians receive their guests;" and he opened the door into the adjoining sanctuary. "Bryan, do you remember the first day you served at mass? The first sentence you then uttered, I trust, has been prophetic."

For the space of a few minutes, they knelt before the altar in prayer together.

The Abbé was the first to rise. On leaving the chapel, Bryan, whom affectionate respect for the venerable man and powerful emotion had hitherto kept silent, began to exclaim,—

"O, my dear sir, my first, best friend!"—

"Nay, we are composed now," said the Abbé: "a truce, for the present at least, to all agitation. I must order dinner for you: it is Friday: I have no fish,—can you dine on a poached egg?"

"On half-a-dozen, sir, perhaps I may," said Bryan, smiling, and controlling himself that he might refrain from disturbing the yet imperfectly restored tranquillity of them both. "You forget the means I have taken to improve my digestive powers."

"On the contrary, I have thought of them much and often. Mr. Harrison must have told you of my admiration of your plan of life."

"I have refrained from doing so," interposed Mr. Harrison, who now entered, "lest he should have too much of present reward."

"A good motive: I will be ruled by it, and will not give you what you do not want."

He rang the bell, and Anastasia appeared. Even her joy at seeing Bryan again was exceeded by her surprise at his improved health and looks.

"You are younger than when you left us, Mr. O'Meara," she said; "and though you are sunburnt, you are fairer in complexion. I may take the liberty of saying this to one whom I have known when a boy: and I hope my master will not be offended, when he remembers what good friends we were."

"And are still, Anastasia," said Bryan kindly.

"Stashey,—Mr. O'Meara and Mr. Harrison will dine with me," said the Abbé: "do your best.—She had

great influence on the conversion of Miss Foxglove," continued Mr. Piron. "Truth is the same to all understandings,—piety is the same to all hearts."

"Pray, sir," said Bryan, almost interrupting him, "give me some account of that business. Mr. Harrison could not so fully describe its progress as you can; nor has he been able to tell me in what situation Miss Foxglove now is in regard to the feelings of her own family on the subject."

"You know," said the Abbé, "that the wars on the continent made the family at Denham give up their project of a continental tour, and of resigning the Hall to Mr. and Mrs. Foxglove. Charles took his bride to London on a visit to her brother, who, as the son of a stanch whig, had obtained a good place under the new ministry. You do not know Mr. and Mrs. Robert Hawke, Bryan; I believe you never were in the country when they visited."

"I have never seen them, sir; I take it for granted they are excellent people," answered Bryan with some impatience.

"They are," said the Abbé. "They invited Arabella to accompany her brother and her new sister-in-law, that she might, without observation, in that crowded metropolis, be reconciled to the Church; for Arabella had told her purpose to all that family before her brother's marriage, that if, as she said, it should be an objection to the alliance, it might be known in good time. Her great, her only difficulty was how to reveal to her mother what would give her so much pain. She requested me to be present at the interview for this purpose. 'I dare not undertake it alone,' she said to me: 'were I to ask my father, I should have to witness a quarrel between them, more grievous to me than the reproaches I expect, which I will endure in a sense of duty, but which your character as a priest may, in some degree, restrain.'—*Point du tout*," continued the Abbé, relapsing into his native tongue, as he was wont to do when talking with those who understood it; "Lady Foxglove's violence was only the greater; but I had the satisfaction of diverting a part of it from her daughter. I have no sentiment but compassion for poor Lady Foxglove, and do not willingly speak in blame of

her. Reasoning, persuasion, supplication, were thrown away. She wished that Italy had been at the bottom of the sea rather than that she should have taken her children thither. She reminded Arabella of the vexation caused to herself by her refusal of Mr. Walton. This indecorum, for such it was, to refer to such a topic in the presence of a stranger like myself, made Arabella resolve to put an end to the scene. 'I understand the nature of your objections to my present purpose, mamma,' she said; 'to me, they are without foundation,—my mind is decided. If on my return from town, you refuse to receive me with kindness, the will of God be done.' I led her to her father, who soothed and cheered her. All was not more than enough, for she was deeply afflicted."

"I know," said Bryan, "that she had the happiness of being admitted to her first communion at Christmas; and that she remained in town for some weeks after. How was she received on her return to Denham?"

"You may imagine it all, Bryan: her father and brother behaved as if the change was not of the least importance; her mother, as if her daughter was lost to her: she is even now insensible to Arabella's meekness and dutiful efforts to regain her love."

"And the Hawke family?"

"Mr. and Mrs. Hawke have almost quarrelled with Lady Foxglove on the subject. Mrs. Foxglove supports the cause of Arabella like a true sister; so that Lady Foxglove is alone in her resentment, and is compelled by Sir Cecil to keep up appearances before the world; as I heard him insist that she should do when last I dined there, and her zeal led her to treat me almost with rudeness. Sir Cecil told me, that Arabella had the goodness to keep very much at home, that he might not be left alone with a cross wife.—You recognize Sir Cecil in this speech.—But Charles's lease of his hunting-box at Grantham is concluded, and he is now on a visit, with his lady, at Denham: she appeared at the races this week in bridal splendour. Why did you not come in time for the races?"

"What a question, Abbé!—what care I for the races at Grantham?"

Bryan took occasion to ask Anastasia in what manner she had assisted in Miss Foxglove's conversion.

"Only by a few words, Mr. O'Meara: but, by the grace of God, it was a word in season. About a month before she went to town, she had been with my master for instruction. I opened the door for her to go away; but she went and sat down in the sacristy. 'I would not be troublesome while with Mr. Piron,' she said, 'but I am rather faint; bring me a glass of water.' I did as she bid me: when she asked, 'Anastasia, why do I not love religion as you do? my heart is not worse than yours.' 'Certainly not, my dear young lady,' I replied, 'but you have not been used to take it to heart.' Some days after, she told me, 'I have pondered your words, Stashey; and have, since then, found great comfort in adoring the Blessed Sacrament, in praying before the image of the Saviour, in addressing the saints and angels, as my friends and mediators; and in thinking how happy I shall be to become one of the great community united by the same faith over the whole world.' I need not tell you, sir, how happy it made me to hear her talk in this way."

Bryan suppressed his emotion, and having bid good evening to the Abbé, the two friends walked pensively to Willoughby.

The next morning, they went to call on the family at Denham. Sir Cecil welcomed Bryan with the utmost cordiality. Lady Foxglove received him as if he had been absent a few days, and as if his return were a matter of indifference. Charles's manner, though his greeting was hearty and familiar, yet conveyed to the mind of Bryan a suspicion that his absence would have been as agreeable as his presence. He jested with Bryan on his having become an Irish landlord, inquired after his tenantry, and even asked how he could leave his farm at the very beginning of the harvest."

"Am I more wanted there than here?" Bryan asked.

"My dear Bryan, it is for you to judge of that. I only know that I am very happy to see you.—Oh, here are Arabella and Clara," said he, looking at the window. "Bryan, I must introduce you to my wife: no longer Clara Hawke whom you knew formerly."

Thus, the course of the mischief that might have arisen from this incivil insinuation and this captious recrimination was turned aside.

Clara entered first. She was indeed changed. Instead of the timid, sensitive girl, she was now the unembarrassed and self-possessing matron. Her address to Bryan was perfectly friendly, but somewhat protecting.

"My father and mother have a design upon you, Mr. O'Meara, to make you pass some days at their house," she said.

Bryan's courteous reply was interrupted by the coming in of Arabella, who had stayed to put off her walking-dress. She, too, was changed. Instead of her former reckless, and somewhat haughty gaiety of air, her countenance now bore the impression of tranquil cheerfulness, that seemed the result of reflection; of a moral intelligence that bespoke an ulterior purpose of the mind. She approached Bryan with a graceful and respectful firmness that enchanted and awed him; took his ungloved hand, and inquired with interest after the health of his mother.

"I have seen her but once, Mr. O'Meara, when she came here to take leave of us," she said; "but I have lately had occasion to become acquainted with her worth."

Bryan was surprised but felt encouraged to answer,—

"I may be permitted, then, to offer her humble congratulations, in the spirit of Christian charity, on your happy conversion: I will presume also to add my own."

Lady Foxglove looked angry, but said nothing. Charles bit his lip, as if to prevent himself from saying something. Sir Cecil cried out,—

"There is evidently a Popish plot carrying on all over the world."

"There is, Sir Cecil," said Mr. Harrison; "the same that have been carrying on for seventeen hundred years."

"I did not believe," said Clara, "that my sister could have been more amiable; but I really think that she is so since she became a Catholic."

"Take care, Clara," cried the Baronet, "you will be bit."

"My wife has too much common sense, I hope," said Charles; then added, with a smile which he could not refuse to the quietly-reproving look of Arabella, "My sister's is uncommon sense."

Mr. Harrison perceived that the topic was painful, and changed it by asking Charles, if he had yet taken a house at Grantham for the winter.

"No," said Charles; "since I gave up my six months' lease of my box there, I have been spunging on my father and father-in-law. I shall want a house for Michaelmas next, or before."

"Will you like mine? I will let it from year to year. I am going to live in Ireland. O'Meara has built a new house for himself on his lately purchased land, and will make over to me his old one. So you may have Willoughby, with as much land as you may want."

The utmost astonishment took hold of all his hearers. He had not explained his motives; for he knew that they would be in direct contradiction to all their notions, and would be interpreted by them as fantastical, enthusiastic, or austere. He defended his plan on the ground of his solitary condition, and the *ennui* of the long winter evenings now that his sight was beginning to fail.

"I am too old for farming," he said, "and Bryan has promised me a good garden, bounded on one side by a babbling brook, and"—

"My dear Harrison," cried Sir Cecil, "I hope you are babbling yourself, and not talking seriously. Surely, at your time of life, you might be contented to stay and die in England."

"It is of little consequence where a man dies; but I am talking of living, as I do not mean to die for many years to come. I mean to live as long as the fathers of the desert, and have adopted their regimen, in part, with that view. Old age is a well-contrived purgatory; and I wish to have as much of my purgatory as may be in this world."

"These are very strange ideas," said Lady Foxglove.

"They must appear so to your ladyship. In fact, it is but of late years that I have entertained them myself, and not many months that I have meditated a project in conformity with them."

Mr. and Mrs. Foxglove expressed their deep regret that he should have formed the purpose of leaving the country; for they had, both of them, an habitual and sincere regard for him. Sir Cecil paced the room in great agitation. Arabella waited for an opportunity, which she knew Mr. Harrison would give her, of being better informed of the nature of his design; and was, for

the present contented to know no more, though she suspected more than the rest; and Bryan's looks confirmed her suspicions.

After some time spent in loud remonstrances on the part of Sir Cecil against a scheme qualified by him as mad and absurd, and in a half-serious, half-playful justification of it on the part of Mr. Harrison, he said to Charles,—

"Will you take my house or not?"

"On condition, my dear sir, that my doing so throw no hinderance in the way of your return, I will take it," answered Charles; "but you must have the power of turning me out, whenever you may change your mind."

The contract was easily concluded.

"Pray, Mr. O'Meara," said Sir Cecil, in a tone of jocular objurgation, "what am I to think of this letter to me from the Irish bishop of ———? I have not yet shewn it to any of my family: reserving myself to do this when you should be present to hear your own condemnation, and justify yourself if you can." He then read, "'Sir, I have received the sum of two hundred pounds in aid of our funds for the relief of the sufferers by famine in this diocese, from one signing himself Bryan O'Meara, and stating that he is enabled to make the remittance by the bounty of a friend and patron in England. I have since learned that he has purchased some property in land, near Athlone; for the means of doing which he professes himself indebted to you. Considering you, therefore, as the source of this benevolence, I beg you will allow me, in compliance with my duty, to return you my most grateful thanks, in union with the prayers and blessings of those whom your munificence has preserved from being victims of the grievous calamity by which we are now afflicted. I have the honour to be, sir, your obliged and faithful humble servant, ——— R.C., Bishop of ———.'—The letter is signed, as you see," resumed Sir Cecil, shewing it to his hearers.

The movements of their minds were various. Charles could not help repenting, for the moment, that he had given two hundred pounds for a hunter, but a few days before.

Mrs. Foxglove exclaimed,—

"It is wonderful!" and looked at Bryan with admiration; as also did Arabella and Mr. Harrison, but without experiencing or expressing any sense of wonder.

Lady Foxglove said,—

"To be sure, Mr. O'Meara has a right to do what he will with his own; but"—

Sir Cecil feared that his lady was about to make some not very gracious observation,—perhaps to say something not very creditable to herself: he interrupted her by saying to Bryan, in the tone with which he began,—

"Well, sir, what do you say to the letter?"

"That it is all true, Sir Cecil."

"Except the inference that I am the benefactor."

"His lordship does not say that, Sir Cecil; but that you are the source."

"No quibbling, Bryan: he considers the money as having been remitted by me through you: what right have you to lay your good works at my door?"

"That was not my intention, Sir Cecil: there is no need for me to attempt to increase your store of good works: but it was necessary for me to account for having come by the money honestly. I was obliged to sign the draft; so that my name appeared."

"And now, I suppose you are very angry with the bishop for having betrayed you?"

"I am certainly very sorry, Sir Cecil, that you have read the letter so publicly."

"I think," said Lady Foxglove, "that as Mr. O'Meara's money was given to him for his own use,"—

"That he has a right, my lady-wife," the Baronet again interrupted, "to do what he would with his own, as you said just now. I sent my donation through the Abbé; but not to so high an amount as yours, O'Meara, for I have a wife and family."

"I hope I may conclude, Sir Cecil, that I have not incurred your blame."

"Thou art a strange fellow, Bryan," said the Baronet, squeezing his hand with an agitated countenance; "a very strange fellow: and so is Harrison; and so are all of you."

All who thought fit to commend this act, were now free to do so. Charles and Clara availed themselves of

the occasion in terms of high eulogium. Arabella praised it; but in a tranquil and recollected manner, as if it appeared by no means extraordinary, his character and motives taken into account.

"He loves the precept of charity," she said, "he feels for his country; he was on the very scene of suffering."

This frank and generous defence of what might seem extravagant or imprudent, was imputed to her desire of doing honour to her newly adopted faith. Mr. Harrison, though silent on the subject, was understood to approve and to be pleased with what Bryan had done.

"I suppose, Mr. O'Meara," said Lady Foxglove, "it is a sort of farm-house that you have been building for yourself."

"Nothing of that sort, madam," Bryan replied; "there are on the land whatever buildings are wanted for the occupation of it: I have merely added to the cabin wherein I was born, what I call the Tower of Albert, for my mother's use and my own."

"Your mother's?" Sir Cecil exclaimed. "Why not your wife's?"

"I shall never take a wife to it, Sir Cecil."

Arabella's agitation was concealed, and her reflections interrupted, by the Archdeacon Fullarton and his lady, who were at this moment announced. The movement occasioned by their entrance saved her, perhaps, from betraying herself. Bryan had acted most unjustifiably in hazarding such a consequence, and in putting the feelings of Arabella to so severe a trial: but he had been piqued by her self-command; by the kindness even of that very reception, in which the sentiment, that he had hoped still lingered in her heart, appeared to be forgotten, or, at least, completely subdued.

"She shall, at least, know that I am true," he had said to himself, at the instant when he had implied his purposed celibacy.

Of this purpose, for the present, no notice was taken by any but by Arabella and by Mr. Harrison, who took especial care to avoid any look or expression of countenance that might increase her confusion; though severely blaming the cause.

Mrs. Fullarton was greeted by inquiries after her last-

born, now two months old. The Archdeacon's long absence was regretted. The company was seated and prepared for passing through the ceremonial of a friendly visit, tedious enough, among persons of totally different minds and interests; for with the exception of Lady Foxglove, there was not one who would not gladly have dispensed with this visit; and the Archdeacon himself found its evils aggravated by the unexpected presence of Bryan and his friend. It was, however, of the course of things to be endured; and Dr. Fullarton would endure every thing but what directly attacked his interests. He addressed our hero with seeming cordiality, and with the words of civility, used on a return after absence. A very awkward suspension of talk then took place; which Bryan relieved by saying,—

"The Archdeacon, I well remember, once expressed himself so handsomely on the subject of my family's forfeited estate, that I shall not fear intruding on him an account of the Tower of Albert: some account is wanted to explain a seemingly romantic name, and as an answer to a question before proposed by Lady Foxglove." He then, in simple, but animated language, recounted what he had seen during what he spoke of as a walk beyond the Shannon, with one companion, a friend and distant relative of his mother. "I justify," he said, "or at least excuse the name and the form I have given to my new dwelling, as expressive of strong natural feeling, not blameable if corrected by religion."

His manner of relating and commenting was such, as forcibly to remind Arabella of his excited behaviour on the bank of the lake a twelvemonth before.

"The Tower of Albert," he continued, "is again held by a true Irishman: may it be in the centre of Ireland a rallying point of the oppressed. Its owner will ever relieve their wretchedness, as far as he may have the ability. This tower was not meant as a neglected adjunct to a lordly mansion; but as a place where piety might dwell; and the heart, throbbing with the recollection of the good of which it was deprived, at length find peace in resignation."

"Do you hear him, sir," said Charles, to his father,

"a point of rallying in the centre of Ireland! I always told you he was a rebel,—"

"On the contrary," Bryan replied, "I wish for an effective union on principles applied to the whole and every part of the empire and its population."

"There are two points," Mr. Harrison observed, "that are never understood, at least never acted on, by the government of England,—the principles of union, and the union of principles. From the moment that a union with Ireland was contemplated, it ought to have been forgotten that England had any claim, just or unjust, to superiority: a national union must proceed on the principle of entire equality. As to union of principle, where a representative government exists, all men ought to be represented. I do not say, that a representative assembly is requisite to the well-being of a people: but, that where such assembly exists, they who have no share in its appointment, are as truly slaves as they would be under a despotism."

"You are an advocate for universal suffrage!" cried Dr. Fullarton.

"Aye, there is always some bugbear," said Mr. Harrison, "that frightens *principle* from the direct path of consistency, into measures of compromise, expediency, evasion, and tortuosity. I do not speak in favour of universal suffrage,—but, it would give to Ireland its due share in the representation, and not more than its due share: but England reserves to itself the lion's share. The consequence will be, that Ireland will abjure the unequal partnership, and leave England to rule itself."

"And what would you do with the house of lords?" Dr. Fullarton asked: "I am very curious to know the extent of your reform."

"Let the peers of England select some from their own number, in the same proportion that Scotland and Ireland do now: or let the three peerages choose a competent number of representatives. The privilege of the peerage would thus be respected; the absurdity of hereditary legislative power would be lessened; and a domination mitigated, which will not long be endured."

Mr. Harrison's purpose in this political discussion was,

not to make a convert of the Archdeacon, whose opinions and interests were too firmly bound together, to be ever separated; but to take from Bryan the opportunity of talking, and to make a diversion in favour of Arabella, whose feelings he perceived to be disturbed by the young man's ambiguous allusions to his own destiny. The conversation continued in the same strain, and Dr. and Mrs. Fullarton took their leave, after a most agreeable morning call.

The bearing of Arabella towards the Archdeacon, indicated on this, as on former occasions, since her conversion, that she remained in his company, solely because she would not directly affront one with whom her parents chose to be on terms of good neighbourhood. Her mother had reproved her, and Arabella had defended her own behaviour; "If he chose to be an inefficient, gentlemanly, tolerating, indifferent, ignorant parson, like Mr. Henry Russel," she said, "it would be his own affair, not mine: but he affects learning, that he may give currency to misrepresentation; he puts on professional dignity, that he may assert a merely legal ecclesiastical superiority: and requires from those who have a better claim, a humble submission to what he must know to be an usurpation."

"I do not understand you, child," said her mother.

Mr. Harrison also contributed somewhat to the annoyance of the Archdeacon, by an observation that a challenge lately made to the Church of England, had hitherto remained unanswered. "It is simply a call for a definition of the word CHURCH, and a definition, at the same time, of the word HERESY; which the author of the challenge considers as correlative terms. Something that you have published, Mr. Archdeacon, is also noticed in the same book."

"I have not even heard of it," said Dr. Fullarton, "I am very much occupied."

"I dare say you are," said Mr. Harrison.

A few minutes after the Archdeacon's departure, Mr. Harrison asked leave to order his carriage.

"I do not grant it," Sir Cecil cried; "you must stay and dine. I have not seen my young friend there, for a long time."

"He wants to call on Mr. and Mrs. Hawke," said Mr. Harrison.

"Well, go and make your visit, and return here; it is but three miles, and you have three hours good."

To this proposal no sufficient objection could be made.

When they were in the carriage, Mr. Harrison said to Bryan, "You seemed to be angry that Arabella should seem to be contented. You could not help answering Sir Cecil's question, 'Why not your wife?' nor do I blame the answer, but the tone of triumph wherewith it was given, as if you wished to add weight, in the estimate of Arabella, to the sacrifice you were willing to make."

"You have probed me to the quick, sir; if she is not mine I could wish her to make the same sacrifice."

"From what motive?"

"I know not; from jealousy, it may be."

"That is a man's weakness, not a woman's. I speak of cases like yours, in which both parties are free. I have known dying wives recommend their successors; and widowers urge the plea in their next courtship: but a dying husband leaves the choice to the disconsolate relict. Moreover, you gave Arabella to understand that you had no more struggles to endure."

"I confess it, sir; I was mortified that her struggle seemed to be ended."

"She may have found strength, Bryan, in the fervour of her conversion, in a new sense of religious duty, and in the consolation thence derived. Recollect, that she knows of nothing which should give you a further claim upon her, than what she herself allowed when last you parted. However, preserve your incognito till all this is cleared up."

A contest had taken place for the borough of Grantham, in which Mr. Walton, spite of the help of his bottle-holder and second Mr. Welwyn, had been defeated, and Mr. Hawke had been returned. This was some compensation to the latter for the loss of the representation of the county, too closely locked up to be invaded.

"While this bill is before the lords," said Mrs. Hawke to Bryan; "Mr. Hawke will have some time to receive you here; and we will talk politics." She then related some particulars of Charles's boorish courtship, as she called

it :—That he had told Clara, when the day was fixed, that if it should be fine open weather, and a good day for the hounds, he must put off the wedding, and that Clara reminded him there would be some difficulty in bringing it on again ; that, on being consulted about some preparations, he had said, that, like the French duke, he only deserved to be "*le moins marié possible*," to which Clara had replied, that he could not be less married than he was then : and that, he had better remain as he was. He had complained of her indifference, and she said, "If I were to be distressed, you would call me childish ; if I were to be angry, you would think me a vixen. I have no resource but to take your own tone."

"In short," said Mrs. Hawke, "he roused and forced Clara into that change of character which you, no doubt, have observed in her. I told them they would agree very well, when they could not help it."

"There are some men," said Mr. Harrison, "who will not take the trouble to be reasonable, nor to resist reason on compulsion."

After waiting, with Bryan, for the return of Mr. Hawke, during an hour of pleasant converse, they drove back to Denham.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

Clara, meanwhile, whose apprehensive faculties had not been dulled and clouded by an habitual reference to the low condition of Bryan, and who was, therefore, more capable of regarding in him the qualities that might make him amiable in the sight of one of her own sex and age,—Clara had watched Arabella, and drawn her conclusion. Following Arabella to her dressing-room, and there gently laying her hand on her arm, looking in her face at the same time with affectionate curiosity :—

"You love him, Arabella," she said, in a tone subdued to a whisper. A stronger symptom than blushes betrayed

Arabella's consciousness: she turned pale, trembled, and seated herself.

"Be not alarmed, dear Bella," Clara said; "who can blame you? I am sensible of his worth: I know the high opinion that my mother has formed of him: he, too, loves you. There are obstacles."—

Arabella had recovered from the first shock of the discovery.

"Insuperable obstacles, Clara," she said; "we know it: and our resolve has been taken: but our meeting again has been painful; we ought never to have met. I have betrayed myself."

"To no one but to me, Bella: a sort of desperate resolution prevented him from seeing that you were affected by his answer to your father's question."

"That answer, Clara;—that answer declares how profound are his sentiments of affection for one whom every consideration but that of his own excellence, must separate from him."

"Let the trial be made, Bella: your father may be sensible of that excellence."

"Oh, no, no, Clara! I should incur the hatred and contempt of all my family. With his family, I could not associate; and I should have no right, were we united, to require of him to give them up on my account. We should be wretched: talk not of an union."

Her extreme distress moved the pity of Clara: in soothing and sympathizing talk, she led Arabella to tell the story of her love from the moment when she herself first became conscious of it; of the efforts which, during ten days that they had dwelt in the same house, they had made to conceal and surmount it; of the declaration of his sentiments on which she had imposed silence, while fully avowing her sense of his merit.

"Why did he return?" she mournfully sighed forth. "My preference of him to all whom I have ever known, is still the same; but I had begun to recover my tranquillity. I had hoped that he was reconciled to the cruel necessity imposed by the difference of our conditions. But you heard and saw him this morning, Clara." Then, in a transport of grief and of violent emotion,

"Clara, dear sister!" she cried, "what is now to be done?"

"Do you repent the sacrifice you have made?" Clara asked. "Do you recall," she said, faintly smiling, "your sentence of banishment?"

"Oh, no! it ought not to be recalled, if it ought ever to have been passed. I would not have inflicted so much pain unnecessarily: I have endured my share. All will have been in vain, unless we persevere."

"Then, let me talk with him in confidence."

"No, Clara, that shall be my task. Manage for us an interview, so that we may not be observed."

"Your own conscience alarms you, Bella; your talking with him alone would pass unnoticed, could you but think that it would be so."

Then, with assurances of tender compassion and of inviolable secrecy in regard to all, but especially her husband, Clara left her to endure the struggle between her well-placed affections and what she thought the duty owed by her to her family and station.

In the evening, the party issued forth from the dining-room to take the fresh air between the house and the lake. The day had been excessively sultry, and of air there seemed to be none. They strolled listlessly up and down. Clara, Arabella, and Bryan drew towards the eastern end of the lake, and down a gentle slope.

"What are Mr. Harrison's intentions, Mr. O'Meara, in going to reside in Ireland?"

To this question, proposed by Arabella, Bryan answered,—

"To pass a life of retirement, and give the increased superfluity of his income to the use of the poor."

"How increased?"

"By the suppression of his establishment and denying to himself every personal expense that can be spared."

"His diet is, at present, that of a hermit," said Clara. "I do not see that he can diminish the cost of that article."

"A life of retreat and of mortification is his choice," said Bryan: "there are many examples in ecclesiastical history of such a mode of life," and he cited some of them.

"Charles is just come out," cried Clara, turning her

view towards the house: "he will want me;—besides you are beginning to talk on subjects that I ought to avoid; for fear of being bit, as Sir Cecil says."

Thus she left them. Arabella felt embarrassed; but Bryan continued the topic.

"Mr. Harrison gives to me the credit of urging him to form this resolve: he but partly knows the motive that led me to the adoption of a life of toil, and servitude, and poverty."

"What do you mean, Mr. O'Meara? Did you adopt such a life?"

"I did, Miss Foxglove. On my return to my own family, it became evident to my senses, when I saw their condition, that the dearest wish of my heart never could be gratified. All that was short of that became a matter of indifference to me. I was raised above poverty: but I desired the merit of voluntary poverty to relieve the wants of others: and labour, under obedience to a tutor in agriculture, relieved me from thoughts and hopes that I had once had the temerity to indulge. I once thought myself preferred; perhaps even beloved."

They were standing at the eastern end of the lake, and appeared, to those who saw them from the house, to be looking at the little cascade formed by the fall of the water over the weir. A bright setting sun glanced its rays upon them; while, to the south, a huge and heavy black cloud hung, and formed a contrast of deep shade. Not the slightest breeze was felt. Nothing threatened a storm; for the cloud was motionless. A few birds only instinctively flew low, and hastened to their coverts. Suddenly, a strong and gleaming flash of lightning darted on them; and the crackling thunder instantly followed, as if bursting immediately over their heads. Arabella, in excess of terror, seized with both her hands the arm of him who stood beside her.

"My dear, dear Bryan!" she exclaimed.

He looked, and saw the deep confusion, that, in a moment afterwards, was expressed in her downcast and averted face. Joy beamed from his own. But the big rain-drops began to fall.

"Shelter, dear Arabella!" he cried; and drawing her arm under his own, hurried to the woodman's lodge,

close by the ancient gateway of the park to which the lake had been, as we have said, extended.

"Fear not," he said; "that flash was too mighty to be repeated; the whole sky is now covered by the cloud: hasten from the rain."

When they were safe from it within the door of the lodge, Bryan led her to a chair and placed himself near her. Convulsive sobs shook her frame.

"Shall I leave you," he asked, "and send up the woodman's wife?"

"No; I have exposed myself enough already: but I rely on your generosity."

"Assuredly I will take no advantage of the surprise: but do not recall the words then uttered: they will make me happy throughout my life,—they will justify my appeal to your father."

"Hear me, Bryan," said Arabella, summoning her rallied spirits: "what I have hitherto refused to declare in express terms, is now revealed. I retract nothing: I will always glory in having preferred you to every other: nor do I desire that what is now known to you should be concealed from others: my former reserve—I cannot call it disguise—was used only for the sake of us both. Apply to my father, if you will. The effect most certainly will be vexation to all my family, and our separation from each other; which, at all events, must now immediately take place."

"You alarm me, dearest Arabella. Will you disavow me in the presence of your family?"

"I will not, Bryan: but you will not ask of me to set them at defiance. What hope then remains? Nothing is changed in our respective situations."

Bryan was exulting in the present, and in his secret sources of hope. And uninfluenced by Arabella's just forebodings,—

"Nothing changed!" he cried. "When I last parted from you, you made it obligatory on me to acquiesce in my fate: you offered me your friendship: I did indeed press this dear hand; but could I then take it as a pledge that the heart accompanied it?"

"You must be contented with the heart, Bryan;" she aid, withdrawing her hand, but not without gently re-

turning the pressure he gave on quitting it; while a placid and benignant smile seemed to add brightness to her tears. She drew a profound sigh: her tender grief emboldened Bryan. He cast his arms around her, and pressed his lips to her cheek.

"You are not yet an acknowledged lover," said Arabella; and her face was now crimsoned deeply. "You promised not to presume on what I said in my sudden terror, Bryan."

"Not on that, dearest Arabella; not on that: but on your generous confirmation of it—on your candour—on the heart you have given me. With that heart I would indeed be contented, but that the hand must authorize me to be yours; to protect, and serve, and comfort you through life. Nothing changed!" he repeated; "when this morning even, your reception of me was so measured, so correct, and friendly."

"How would you have had me behave myself? I had not then, as since I have done, betrayed my affection to you. Would you have had me reveal it to others? With all my guard over myself, I have not escaped the penetration of Clara. I have been obliged to give her my confidence."

"What says Clara?" Bryan asked abruptly. "What is her opinion—her advice?"

"That you should avoid all terms intended to be understood by others in reference to the subject you speak of, and by me in a sense that cannot but alarm. You talked of your lost patrimony: you meant me to perceive that it was not that alone which you regretted."

"I did, in very truth, Arabella; forgive my imprudence. But has it procured for me the favourable interposition of Mrs. Foxglove?"

"She thinks of you as you deserve, Bryan: of any project of our union—as it deserves also. And was it necessary," she proceeded, after a little hesitation, "to give a direct answer to my father's question,—'Why not your wife?'"

"I should have thought it treason to my love to answer otherwise," he cried. "I should indeed have acted with duplicity, had I given you to believe that I could ever marry another."

"Surely, Bryan, when the cause is determined against

you, as it certainly will be, you may still find some one"—

"No, Arabella, never: let your family reject with scorn the poor Irish peasant,—so long as your heart is mine, he will respect the precious treasure: he will respect himself."

A spreading flash of lightning was now seen, and, in a few seconds, loud and continuous thunder sounded.

"I am not alarmed now," said Arabella: "the storm is rolling onward. This is not like the clap of thunder bursting over the heavens with a crash, while the flame seemed to envelop us."

"The most beautiful natural phenomenon that I ever witnessed!" cried Bryan. "Oh, what do I owe to it!"

Arabella replied,—

"The forked lightning dispersed the cloud that hung over us; but it spread that cloud over all the horizon, and obscured the bright sunshine: nay, Bryan," she added, faintly smiling, "that sunshine was of the setting sun."

"Why this mournful interpretation, dearest?" said Bryan. "The moment when you grasped my arm and called me your dear Bryan"—

"That flash made the storm burst upon us," she interposed; "when it is over, our sun will be set. I had wished to speak with you alone. Clara left us that I might have the opportunity; but how different the result from what I had purposed. I had intended to recall you to moderation and to caution: I have betrayed myself, and the extent of my affection. I had hoped to persuade you to seek for happiness in some other union, and I have"—

"Made me devote myself to you for ever!" he cried. "Now, dear Arabella, I put you to the test:—would you marry another?"

"I will be frank with you, Bryan: I will neither give nor receive a pledge;—useless, if the purpose remains; and dangerous, if it should alter; implying distrust rather than a mutual reliance, and demanding, as a duty, what ought to be a tribute of free-will."

A servant was now seen running across from the house: he had on an oil-skin hat and rough box coat: leaving these in the lodge, he came up stairs and presented a

strip of paper to Arabella, on which Charles had written, in pencil, as follows:—

"Dear Bella,—We hope you enjoy your tête-à-tête; would send the carriage for you, but that the horses would be wet—to the skin, as Bryan would say, and require a good hour's grooming. We wish to know the state of your nerves. C. F."

"Tell them," Arabella said, "that I was excessively startled at first, but the storm is now passing over."

"Shall I wait below, madam?"

"No: they want to know how I am."

"I will attend Miss Foxglove home," Bryan said, "as soon as the rain ceases."

The man retired, enveloped himself as before, and returned to the hall.

"How little do they surmise what has happened, Bryan!" She gave him the note; he read it.

"I am myself appalled," he said, "when I anticipate the blame that will be thrown on you, dear Arabella: for myself I care not. I have been tutored by all the varieties of my own experience in high and low life: believe me, I am prepared to bear all that scorn and reproach which you think will be my portion; and which this note unintentionally warns me to expect. Had it been a Walton, a Lord John Boyne, the tête-à-tête would not have been so lightly spoken of: but I am too low to aspire. And this sneer! Your brother loves me not. He will be, in this cause, my worst enemy. And your mother"—

"And all her kind and pitying friends, who have already been so plaintive on the subject of my conversion!" said Arabella: "the false, selfish, ignorant, intriguing Dr. Fullarton; and others of his trade, and all our squirearchy and their dames. Even Mrs. Craig will abandon me. On every other point, she would like you the better for being a Catholic; but family pride is, with her, no mean recommendation of the Catholic faith."

"Oh, Arabella," cried Bryan, "were you but friendless and destitute! But I will not expose you to the trial, environed as you are with all the pride and prejudice of those with whom you have hitherto lived; whom you have already offended."

"I shrink not, Bryan," replied Arabella, without under-

standing his allusion. "What I have avowed to yourself, you have my leave to declare to my father,—to all the world. They who know you, will do me justice, and I regard not the judgment of those who know you not; and who, by censuring my choice, would prove that they know not me. I shall evince my own sense of duty by submitting to the decision of my own family. Whether you will propose yourself to them or not, is for you to determine. Better to give up what you will never obtain."

"No: that would be to suffer evil lest it should befall. You have given me courage; for on your account only my heart failed me."

"Where shall we live, dearest Bella," he asked, "when I have the happiness of calling you mine?"

"If I should ever be more yours, Bryan, than now I am"—

"I thank you for those delightful words!" he exclaimed with fervour. "It seems unreasonable in me to wish for more happiness than they confer on me."

"You will never have more than that, Bryan: agitated and imperfect as has been the pleasure of this conference, you may regard it as the last in which even the shadow of hope will cheer us."

"Worse than the raven's croak: but tell me;—let us hope, till we must despair,—in that case?"

"In that case, your country is my country."

"Would you consent to live in Ireland?"

"You would be more happy there than in England, and I should be away from those, who, even if they consent, will do it grudgingly. My father's and my brother's infidelity shocks me: my mother's prejudices distress me still more; she is so perfectly sure of being in the right, with the help of the law of the land and Dr. Fullarton."

"Then you would not object to live in a good country-gentleman's house, in my own Ireland; in some pleasant situation: not too near my own poor family? Of them, you shall see no more than your own kind and good heart may prompt you to desire. I will never forsake them."

"Nor will I, Bryan: but I will not give myself credit

for sentiments that will never be put to proof. What will become of Mr. Harrison?—his scheme will be thwarted."

"He may continue it, or he may live near us."

"Come, Bryan; let us not lose more time," said Arabella, with a faint sigh; "the rain has ceased."

"I am truly sorry for it," he said.

She insisted. "Another cloud is following: let us hasten between the storms. My words are most ominously applicable to our present circumstances."

"But the sun shines again."

"It is nearly set."

"It will rise again, dearest: this day, at least, it will set on one whom you have made happy."

He repeated his offence; and was again forgiven.

"It is for a farewell, my dear, dear Bryan," she said, gently pushing him from her. "There! I repeat the words, that you may know that they come from the heart, at least,—if not from the head. Yet, had not the head approved, the heart would, from the first, have resisted better."

On their return, they stopped for a moment at the little water-fall.

"That stream flows onward to the Eastern Sea," Arabella said: "your goodly Shannon pours itself into the vast Atlantic. Their waters may meet in the mighty ocean that encircles the globe;—our souls may find each other in that eternity by which our time on earth is bounded."

"If you are thus imaginative, why not picture to yourself some few years of happiness before that period?"

"They are not prepared for us, Bryan; but we shall have known each other that we may form just notions of the true end for which those few years of life have been granted. You have seized these notions, Bryan, and you have devoted your wealth,—be it much or little, the merit is the same,—to the use of the indigent: you share their toil; you live like them; your friend is about to follow your example."

"I do not know," Bryan replied, "that Mr. Harrison will undertake what a labourer would call 'a day's work;' he is not young, and has had other habitudes: but some

work of labour he will do and bear in the spirit of penance; and it will be no mean encouragement to the poor, no slight motive of contentment, that one, not compelled by necessity, adopts their state. The preference given to that state by our blessed Redeemer himself, has been often urged to them as an argument for patient suffering. A practical illustration and commentary on the divine lesson, is given when voluntary poverty is embraced."

"You give due honour to your friend," Arabella observed; "but you take no praise to yourself."

"O, as to me, I was known only as one of a peasant's family: it was quite simple and natural, in the judgment of our neighbours, that I should do as they did to whom I belonged. My grandfather went out to daily labour, till disabled by age; my mother and my father's sister did the same, till the time of the purchase of my land; and they now discontinue it, except on my farm, only that they may not be accused of taking the means of livelihood from others."

"A very curious method this of paying your addresses to a baronet's daughter!" she said; "are you not afraid lest you should alarm my pride?"

"Arabella," he replied, "I could not deceive you, even if I would; you know who and what I am."

"I have always known it, Bryan;" she answered. "Had your education not taught you piety, it would have been incomplete; nay, miserably defective. That has perfected the work: that, hereafter, I hope to be enabled to emulate."

They came to the door of the hall, where Clara met them, and in compliance with a sign from Arabella, accompanied her up stairs. On being told what had passed, Clara, anxious to tranquillize the agitated spirits of Arabella, observed that the accidental exclamation caused by terror, had made nothing known that both of them had not before been conscious of, and that it was no sufficient reason for such a change of measures: that what had hitherto been concealed, might be concealed still; that the revelation of it would produce nothing but embarrassment and finally separation, for that Bryan's visits would certainly be forbidden.

"I have not the least doubt, Clara," said Arabella,

"that such will be the termination; but it would be inconsistent both with duty and delicacy, to see Bryan without acknowledging to my parents in what light I now regard him. I have deprived myself of the right of rejecting him: my parents will exercise that right; but I shall have the occasion of doing justice to his merit, by testifying my respect for him and his character to them and to all the world."

Meantime, Bryan had requested of Sir Cecil permission to speak to him in private. Sir Cecil led the way to his own room. Bryan in rapid and fervent terms, and, against his own judgment, still concealing what Mr. Harrison wished him to conceal, declared his affection for Arabella, conceived at the moment of his last return from college; the efforts made by both to suppress their mutual love; the manner in which she had refused to hear even a declaration of his sentiments; the determination of them both to conquer an attachment forbidden by the inequality of their situation in life: the movement of terror that had impelled her to an almost involuntary demonstration of her love for him; and the permission he had received, within the last half-hour only, to refer their fate to her father.

"I am fully aware, Sir Cecil," thus he concluded, "of the nature and the force of the impediments you will see to such an alliance. I can now offer no excuse for my presumption but your daughter's preference, your indulgence, and the good opinion you may have formed of me."

Sir Cecil was held mute by astonishment; at length he said, "Bryan, this is too much,—too much for you to say, or for me to hear. If I demur for a moment to give you a decisive answer, it is only from respect to your character, and because I wish first to speak with Arabella herself: a conference with her alone may perhaps save me from the disagreeable necessity of mentioning the affair to Lady Foxglove: in that quarter, you must know that the objections will be insurmountable."

He added, "I, however, will not quarrel with you; nor will I reprove Arabella for her preference of you; I would rather help you both to get the better of a misplaced attachment; misplaced it must be considered by all but yourselves."

Bryan was preparing to reply, and it is very doubtful whether he would have kept his pledge to Mr. Harrison; but Sir Cecil stopped him.

"No more of this at present, Bryan; only thus much; let not this delay on my part lead to expectations that may aggravate disappointment. I hope we may ever be friends."

"May I call on you again, Sir Cecil?"

"Some time next week;" and he shook Bryan's hand with a dejected smile.

"I will hope something from that look, Sir Cecil."

"The look implies my regard for you; nothing more."

They returned to the drawing-room. Arabella was not there. Clara, while pouring out the coffee, excused her absence; "her nerves, to use the terms of your jesting note, Charles, have been more agitated than we imagined," she said.

Sir Cecil understood the meaning of this; he saw that Clara was in his daughter's confidence, and resolved to talk first with her. Charles carelessly inquired of Bryan whether they had escaped the rain, and Lady Foxglove said "I dare say she will be well enough to go to chapel to-morrow; it is no small inconvenience to send the carriage with her so often."

"You have taken all our churches, madam," said Mr. Harrison; "that is no small inconvenience to us."

"By the bye," said Charles, "why should not mass be said in the parish church before the time of our service? Such things are done in Germany."

"We are not come to that plan as yet!" said Lady Foxglove: "but I suppose we soon shall."

"Better declare them all to be *biens nationaux*," said the baronet.

"That falls in with my theory, Sir Cecil;" said Mr. Harrison; "a clear stage and no favour."

His carriage was announced, and he with Bryan took leave; the latter saying to Clara, "I hope, Ara—Miss Foxglove is not worse than when I attended her home."

"Much the same, Mr. O'Meara," said Clara significantly.

Bryan related to his friend the whole of what had occurred.

"From this instant," said Mr. Harrison, after listening with deep interest, "the affair bears a different aspect. Formerly I endeavoured to reconcile you to your loss: perhaps, I shall again have the same task to perform. In any case, rely on all I can do for your comfort. As for your success, I know not how much of influence I may have with that family. I shall be regarded as an interested party: that will be prejudicial to my efforts in your cause. But still I shall be able to overrule any hostile decision."

"Your support, my dear sir, will help me to success; will console me if finally disappointed. But let me open my heart to you: talk with me unreservedly."

"There is now no reason why I should do otherwise, Bryan: Arabella no longer forbids you to think of her; she avows her love, and permits your suit to be declared. I am willing to join with you in admiring her greatness of mind: I approve of her preference of what she believes would be a moderate independence with you, to a splendid union with one not possessed of your personal qualities. Leave the event to God; and wait it with equanimity. Life is short: eternity is long; and wealth in this world is more powerful than thoughts of either."

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

THE CONCLUSION.

"If we lived in an intellectual and philosophical world, Arabella," said Sir Cecil to his daughter, on the following evening: "if all mankind were capable of estimating the moral excellence of an individual;—if one generation would think it a duty to compensate the injustice done by its predecessors,—then, indeed, your preference of a man of great talents, of extraordinary virtue, and of a family of some note a century since, might be reckoned as a common occurrence: but what will be thought of it in the present state of things; a state in which, bad as it is, we must live?"

"But need we conform to it, papa? Need we frame our notions and our conduct by its dictates?"

"We must; or be censured, disavowed, degraded. But let us come nearer home; for I see you will compel me to refer the matter to your mother and brother."

"I would wish you to do so, dear papa; but still to act on your own judgment, for what theirs will be I know full well."

"I know it too, Arabella: and I would wish you to spare me the pain of an application to them by resigning your purpose."

"You do not condemn my choice, dear father; you do not refuse your consent."

"Your choice does credit to your discrimination, Bella; most happy would I be to consent, but for objections as evident as the merit of the man of your choice."

"I had yielded to them, papa; I had required of him also to yield to them; but when, yesterday, I became acquainted with traits of character still more admirable than all I had known of him before,—when I heard of his having prepared a dwelling for himself alone,—when he explained to me in what manner he had abandoned himself, unreservedly and without mitigation, to the condition of his birth, because, without me, all was worthless to him but devotion and good works,—I will own to you, my dear father, that I was then far from deserving his reproach of indifference; and that when the flash burst from the cloud, I clung to him in my terror, with a feeling that the elements themselves seemed awfully to reprove me for abandoning one who was so worthy of my dearest affection, and to admonish me by an irresistible voice to take him for my support and stay."

Here Arabella unconsciously leaned on the arm of her father, taking hold of it with both her hands in the same manner as she had hung on that of Bryan: she wept profusely.

"You need not act the scene over again to me, my dear," said her father; "it has been described to me."

He said this with a smile of kindness; at the same time kissing her affectionately, and adding,—

"It was a high-minded impulse that made you declare your love, Arabella: the electric shock was but the occasion."

"I should very probably have said the same thing more quietly, papa; but for that accident."

"And it then became a generous and loyal proceeding no longer to deprive Bryan of his chance of acceptance with us. But, understand me, Bella;—though I approve of him and of your conduct, I cannot agree to your union, if it is to disturb and destroy, for ever afterwards, the peace and happiness of our family. I shrink from taking on myself the painful task of forbidding it by my sole refusal."

"You will have my mother to assist you, sir."

"Most likely; and your brother, too."

"What can my brother have to do with it?"

"Much, dear Bella: it is a family concern, which, in some respects,—that is, as far as the connection is to be taken into account,—regards him even more than me. And would you, even if I could permit such an unequal match,—would you leave me, dearest, to dwell with loud reproach or smothered discontent at home, aggravated abroad by the factious simpering of inquiring ladies, or the subdued grin of congratulating gentlemen?"

"At any rate, sir," said Arabella, "since you will not exercise alone the authority that belongs to you as a father, let the question be put to my mother: nor can I, if I would, prevent you from consulting my brother. I will never be ashamed of my attachment to Bryan. I will always glory in it; and will take effectual care to be relieved from the addresses of any and of all other pretenders."

Sir Cecil saw that the spirit of his daughter was roused; that she was but scantily gratified by the demonstration of his paternal love: he refrained from probing the meaning of her concluding words, lest he should engage her to a hasty resolve. He went to his lady, and told her, in substance, that O'Meara had, with Arabella's permission, proposed himself as a suitor, and had asked for the sanction of her parents.

"And you have signified your approbation, Sir Cecil!" said Lady Foxglove, with an hysteric laugh.

"I thought it right to ask your opinion, Lady Foxglove."

"Opinion! there can be but one opinion on the sub-

ject. Pray let Bella come here, that I may wish her joy."

The Baronet knew that his lady would have more than one opportunity of making her daughter feel the full effect of her resentment. He returned to the room where he had left Arabella.

"In kindness to you, my dear, I will be present at your first interview with your mother," he said. "You like to have a support in a storm, you know." Then, seeing that she was hurt by this ill-timed pleasantry, he added, "I can support you, my dear Bella: I have not reproached you, and never will: and I will not suffer any one to do so."

When Arabella, leaning on her father, presented herself before her mother, that lady rose from her seat.

"I have requested the pleasure of seeing you, Miss Foxglove, that I might congratulate you on the splendid alliance you have in view." And again she laughed.

"If you mean to exact of your daughter what may be to her a subject of disappointment or distress of mind, your gaiety is in very bad taste," said Sir Cecil.

"When my daughter refused Mr. Walton, I was angry; when she became a Roman Catholic, I was grieved. Nothing is left me now but to laugh," replied Lady Foxglove.

"Nothing can be more perfectly intelligible, mamma," said Arabella, "and if my father will not think it wrong, I will retire."

"You will gain nothing by any longer stay, but to see some more violent effect on my nerves and health, as the consequence of this provocation."

"It may have some effect on my health, too," said Arabella, "to be treated by my mother with insult not very distinguishable from cruelty."

Lady Foxglove felt the force of the word "cruelty," but would not own that she felt it, otherwise than by replying,—

"Consider how one provocation follows another. You seem determined to make my whole life one series of contradictions. Pray, had your refusal of Walton any thing to do with this—what am I to call it?—this"—

"I understand you, mamma; you need not fill up the

sentence. No: my rejection of Mr. Walton was owing to my opinion of his character. I should have hoped that your zeal for your religion would have prevented your regretting that I did not marry a duellist."

"So, I am to be twitted with my zeal for religion, since you have thought proper to leave the religion of our forefathers."

"Pardon me, madam;—I have returned to it: but both the one and the other forbid duelling."

"It may be so; but no young man of Mr. Walton's rank can refuse to fight a duel: your brother would not refuse."

"I am afraid he would not, madam:—indeed, he says so himself."

"What is all this to the purpose?" cried Sir Cecil.

"Very true," said the lady. "Walton's affair is past: but one question more, with your leave, Sir Cecil, respecting a present grievance. Had this Mr. Bryan O'Meara—so, I presume he is called, as his grandfather is living, who, at present, is the head of the family—had your strange attachment to this low-born Irishman any thing to do with your conversion?"

"No, mamma: I had thought on the subject of my conversion long before I had any attachment to him; and had entirely renounced that attachment before I became a convert; but he himself had much influence by an example which, to use the words of Scripture, 'adorned the doctrine of God his Saviour in all things.'"

This testimony imposed a silence of a few moments. Sir Cecil resumed:—

"Your ladyship may remember," he said, "that you once asked O'Meara if he would marry a Protestant, and were answered in the affirmative: religion is, therefore, quite out of the question."

"Why, perhaps he might condescend to marry the daughter of Sir Cecil Foxglove," the lady said, "even though she were a heretic."

"Let us be gone, Bella," said the Baronet; "the spirit of Dr. Fullarton is at work here."

Sir Cecil Foxglove was not wanting in pride of birth and wealth and station: by this pride, or by means of a modified, and, as he deemed it, a rational regard for these

objects, he hoped to lead his daughter to renounce an alliance with one to whom fortune had refused all these advantages. But Sir Cecil was, as we have seen, no bigot: he feared that his wife was taking the course of making, of a case of love, a case of conscience; and his daughter if reproached, at one and the same time, for her conversion to the Catholic faith and for her affection to Bryan, might, by possibility, combine in her mind the two objects so as to make of the one a consequence of the other.

"You know your mother's sentiments, Bella," he said.

"Yes, sir: mamma has been pleased to impart them to me without the least management."

"Then let us withdraw; the sooner this scene is ended the better."

Lady Foxglove made no effort to detain them. Immediately after their departure, she rang her bell, and sent a message to her son desiring to speak with him.

Charles, to whom Clara, at the request of Sir Cecil, had willingly refrained from making herself the channel of unpleasing intelligence, was as yet ignorant of the plot carrying on against the dignity of his house. His mother communicated it to him with a due accompaniment of expression of horror and dismay. In great wrath Charles burst from her, and precipitated his steps to his father's room, where he found him seated with Arabella, and endeavouring to comfort her under her mother's displeasure, by the kindest terms consistent with his own reluctance to consent to her union with Bryan.

Charles broke in upon them, and was not withheld by the presence of his sister from exclaiming, "I understand, sir, that you have given your approbation of a proposal which O'Meara has had the audacity to make, of allying himself to this family."

"Who told you so?"

"My mother, sir."

"Your mother is mistaken. As to O'Meara's audacity, there is no law that makes this proceeding criminal in him."

"You mean, sir, he cannot be hanged for it; but in the opinion of every man of honour, he richly deserves it."

"I trust I am a man of honour, Charles, and I do not

think so. But your mother's furious behaviour will drive Bella into the measure, and your insolence will impel me to consent to it. I insist upon it, that we talk no more of it this evening."

"Then, sir," said Arabella, "I will make no remark on my brother's vulgar outrage; your reproof of it shall suffice." She retired to her own room for the remainder of the day.

That day had been passed by her lover in the alternations of an unquiet mind. He had attended the chapel at Grantham, and had had the satisfaction of seeing Arabella in her new character of Catholic convert; had remarked her recollected devotion; her calm, though melancholy look. He had paid a visit, required by ceremony, to Mrs. Craig; he thought he might meet Arabella at that house, but she had returned immediately after the holy office. Mrs. Craig's cheerful and friendly talk jarred on his soul like discord; for she counselled a prudent and suitable choice of a partner for life; one who might manage his farm-house for him.

"My mother—my aunt can do that, madam."

"Do not be offended, Bryan," she added, "I have known you almost from your childhood, and sincerely wish you well; and though, with your attainments, I think you are thrown away, yet I am happy you are so well provided for."

He thanked, and left her; and went to rejoin his friend, whom he had left at the house of Mr. Piron.

Even the converse of that venerable man had lost its charm for Bryan. The Abbé observed the change, and that a deep anxiety possessed the young man's mind: he saw, too, that Mr. Harrison was privy to the cause by his bearing towards him.

They returned home; when Bryan's troubled spirit suggested a cruel doubt, which he imparted to his friend. "She does not love me," he said, "at least, not enough to share my lot in life: she has only given me leave to propose myself to her family that I may be rejected by competent authority."

A note was brought from Mr. Hawke, inviting him to pass a few days with him, and fixing on Tuesday as the day his visit should commence.

"Then I will go to Denham, sir, to-morrow, and know my fate!" he exclaimed.

Mr. Harrison succeeded, at length, in encouraging and tranquillizing him.

The next day, Bryan rode to the village of Denham; and, utting up his horse at the inn, walked into the churchyard; Mr. Harrison having promised to drive round by Grantham, and to meet him on his arrival. Drawing near to the grave of Albert, "My father," he said, "hadst thou returned to our country, I had been carried back by thee; had been brought up in ignorance of all that now causes my disquietude; had been like my thoughtless and happy cousin Mark, or my good and worthy friend Hugh Moylan; my pleasant companions in servitude for seven months, by no means the least interesting nor the least commendable portion of my life! Labour is a curse imposed by the Father of Mercies, who has provided alleviations that render it tolerable where the tyranny of the rich does not aggravate its evils;—of the rich, who while they exempt themselves from that curse, are subjected to a still heavier malediction. But let me, while guarding against intellectual pride, acknowledge the high prerogative of a cultivated mind: that benefit, my dear father, you have obtained for me: what you could not have given, I have received by your means. On your account, too, I was relieved from absolute want, and raised to a state, which they, who were in this life your friends and neighbours, hailed with their gratulations. Oh! intercede for me, and let not these be the only blessings which you purchased for me with your life. Intercede for me, that she, the desired of my heart, may be granted to me; and that, with increased means of happiness, I may be enabled to honour my future station of life, as truly as you, my dear father, adorned the lowly lot that had fallen upon us."

He rose, and took the path that led to the abode of her whom he loved. She had passed the early part of the morning with her family, and in an understanding that his suit was to be rejected. He presented himself at the door of the hall. Mr. Harrison was not arrived; but Clara had seen Bryan coming, and had gone up stairs to prevent Arabella from appearing; for such was the

arrangement deemed most judicious by the family. Arabella, however, judged otherwise, and scarcely was he introduced in the room where her parents and brother were assembled, than she herself entered, leaning on the arm of Clara.

"It would have been better, Mr. O'Meara," said Charles, "if you had been shewn into a room with my father alone, considering, what I presume to be, the purport of your visit."

"No, brother," Arabella rejoined; "since you regard Mr. O'Meara as deserving the death of a felon, perhaps you may derive some pleasure from witnessing the execution."

"I certainly am of opinion that the conduct of Mr. O'Meara has much of the nature of felony; since he has availed himself of his admission into this family to steal the affections of my father's daughter."

"We are all of us aware, brother, that he would not have been admitted, had such a consequence been contemplated. But you talk as if I were a girl of seventeen. I am one year older than Bryan; and as capable of judging of him as he is capable of judging of me; and I have stolen his affections as much as he has stolen mine. Is it not so, my dear friend?" Arabella said, turning to Bryan. Then, taking his hand, "Come with me to this window," she continued; and pointing to the lake, "there, on that spot," she said, "your father saved the son and heir of this house from the death of a supernumerary kitten: yes! but for your father, he would have been drowned who now treats your father's son with such contempt."

"I had hoped the son had been rewarded," said Charles: "there is no need to carry our gratitude to any extent that he may desire."

"I did not expect to be taunted with that reward, Mr. Foxglove," said Bryan; "I am quite ready to restore it."

"And take, instead, five times its amount," retorted Charles: "you are a good calculator."

"Calculator!" Arabella cried. "He is as much your superior in generosity, Charles, as abundant alms-giving surpasses selfish indulgence."

Sir Cecil interposed: "You were not taunted, Bryan:

nothing was said or meant to that effect: we have enough on our hands at present, without recurring to the past. Let us wait as quietly as we may, to know what Arabella proposes to herself by this strange scene."

In fact, her excited manner and language had astonished all present, and prevented Bryan from requesting that the explanation might be delayed till Mr. Harrison's arrival. She stood near the window by the side of Bryan; her height, within a little, equalled his; the full mid-day light beamed on them both; and exhibited a fine contrast of fair feminine beauty with the manly comeliness of his well-formed figure and his features of darker hue. Her look, when turned towards him, expressed unreserved affection: his countenance declared his admiration of her, contending with surprise and the vicissitudes of hope and fear.

She resumed; "It was intended, dear Bryan," she said, "that you should be summoned to a private audience of my father, to receive your final dismissal: hereafter to be mentioned by him in terms of unprofitable pity, and by others with an air of triumph on a victory over extravagant pretensions. I submit to the will of my parents"—Bryan started: she gently moved her hand as desiring him to be composed—"but not to the temper with which it is accompanied, nor to the justice of the arguments that have led them to the decision. My mother"—Lady Foxglove shewed symptoms of uneasiness, and would have interrupted, but that all were bent on hearing—"my mother believes in the infallibility of the world; she adds her suffrage to its maxims; she is herself a part of it; does honour to it, and is honoured by it. She is not insensible to moral worth; but the world has told her that moral worth is but a secondary consideration in the choice of a son-in-law, and that, even where moral worth is found, it weighs as a feather in the absence of other qualifications. Even the moral rectitude of duelling depends, with her, on the station of the parties." Here Bryan cast towards Charles a look of reproof for having betrayed a secret; but he understood that Arabella approved what had been his conduct, and meant only to set in its proper light her mother's

inconsistency. Lady Foxglove would have retired in anger, but curiosity detained her.

Arabella continued: "My father by no means believes in the infallibility of the world; he knows that it both deceives and is deceived; he thinks, he talks with the wise, but he acts with the vulgar; yes, professedly, he conforms his actions to the judgment of those whom he despises; he makes greater sacrifices to please them than his own high-minded probity and right understanding would exact of him.

"And now, dearest Bryan, shall I tell you my own opinion of our alliance?" she said, extending her hand to him:—he pressed it and gazed on her as if life and death hung on her lips, while his own heart was too full for him to speak. She proceeded: "Even were my parents to give their consent, their reluctant permission, it could not be a happy one. You would hereafter blame yourself for having separated me from their affectionate regard, and that of other relatives and friends; from my brother, who thinks it belongs to his place in the family to have an effectual vote in this affair; from my dear Clara, whose admiration of your character, whose sense of justice even, must yield to circumstances: our families could never be united. Now reflect how much is included, in that sole consideration, of what must be displeasing and mortifying on both sides, not only to the members of both families, but to ourselves also; to you especially, who would most keenly feel the arrogance of such repulsion. Be patient, Bryan," she said, seeing him about to speak; "I would reconcile you to our separation."

"But hear me, my parents," she proceeded; "he is not to be sent away like a low-minded intruder after an unsuccessful attempt to obtain a prize to which neither education, moral character, nor manners, gave him the least claim: the reverse of this is true of him. Since my submission to the will of my parents is conscientious and voluntary, I will propose conditions, and such is the meaning of this scene, as you, my dear father, have termed it. I require that Bryan be restored to the unabated friendship of my family; that his having sought

me in marriage be not regarded as a discreditable proceeding to be kept secret from all the world, but as a preference most honourable to me, for in that light I view it; that our future intercourse be freed from all precautions against a renewal of a design now and henceforward to be abandoned;—a concession that may be reasonably made to one who, giving up the object whom all must deem personally worthy of her choice, declares she will never yield to the addresses of any other.

"Yes, dearest Bryan," she said, in answer to his look expressive of an anxious doubt whether he had apprehended her meaning fully; "yes, my future friend, our friendship shall be cemented by our unity of purpose; by devoting our lives to the same end, in the same spirit. I will have recourse to a life of retirement,—not in a cloister, where I should contract obligations incompatible with the duties now incumbent on me, but in the house of my parents, promoting, as far as I may, their happiness, and maintaining harmony between them." Sir Cecil and his lady cast towards each other an awkward and a mutually reproving glance, and a look of blame towards their daughter, to which she replied, "I allude to what is known to all here present—this is an occasion for speaking without reserve. It was intended to inflict on him, the just object of my preference, an humiliating sense of his inferiority; but these are not the conditions on which I consent to sacrifice myself to the pride of my family. These are not the feelings which must henceforth attach to him whom I would have chosen. My brother will shew his gratitude to me by his friendship for one whom he must own to be his superior in every thing but the accident of birth."

"You have no right to say that, Bella," cried Sir Cecil angrily; "you have no right to impute to your brother any defect in virtue."

"My brother's virtues," Arabella replied, "are the result of impulse; he is virtuous because he is inclined to be so: the virtues of Bryan O'Meara are grounded on moral principle, and carried to an elevation to which my brother would think it fantastic to aspire. Suppose Bryan's case your own, Charles," she said, turning to him with an air as if exulting in the high sense she enter-

tained of Bryan's merit; "suppose yourself to have the command over the affections of one whom you loved, one of independent fortune, and of an age to be legal mistress of her own actions, one of sufficient strength of mind to defy all consequences of a union with you, but withheld from contracting that union by a sentiment that induced her to yield to an authority exercised, not according to good sense, or reason, or justice, but according to the caprice and prejudice and pride of birth and station;—in such a case, you would try all your art to overcome weakness and scruples, and would evince no readiness to prefer your claim before an unfavourable tribunal? Such is not the conduct of Bryan, nor can you with truth cast the least blame on him."

Charles made no reply; and a short silence ensued. Arabella's hearers waited, with an air of deference, for what she might further have to say. She added,—

"Bryan has behaved to me most generously; to my family, with loyalty and honourable forbearance; on his account, and on my own, I call on them to express their sense of their obligation to him."

"Dearest Arabella," said Bryan, anxiously, "decide not my lot so hastily. Mr. Harrison is coming—he promised to be here before this. Would that I had not promised him! But, oh! do not decide till you have heard him."

He was about to take her hand: she, with a melancholy smile of affection, waved it towards her father. He seemed absorbed in grief, so that Lady Foxglove and Charles trembled lest he should swerve from his purpose of refusal. He observed Arabella's movement, and coming up to Bryan,—

"Dear and valued friend," he said, "you have every title to my profound esteem—my entire confidence."

Lady Foxglove was unmoved; she thought it was her turn to speak.

"Mr. O'Meara, when I said what, on your account, offended Arabella, it was under a mistaken impression of Sir Cecil's meaning. I shall always be happy to regard you as a friend."

"The same misunderstanding must plead my excuse also, Bryan," said Charles: "do not refuse my offered

hand; let us be to each other, what we were before this dispute."

"What we were last year, Charles, if you please," Bryan replied.

Charles was confused; for he perceived that Bryan had penetrated to the secret of that petty jealousy, of which, though he subdued it not, he was ashamed, as unjust and as degrading to himself.

Clara drew near to Bryan, with expressions of the kindest and deepest sympathy. Arabella gave him a look that conveyed her inmost soul: his own look responded in all the fulness of kindred intelligence; but there was an uncertainty,—an appearance of perplexed indecision in his manner which surprised Arabella, as being so different from his usual bearing. He turned his head with fretful impatience, and looked out of the window. Mr. Harrison's carriage was at the door of the mansion; and in another instant, he entered the room.

"Oh! my dear sir," cried Bryan, "why have you so cruelly delayed? How can I free myself from the imputation of levity which will be cast upon me? how can I atone to Arabella for the pain I have unnecessarily given!"

"Mine must be the blame," answered Mr. Harrison, mournfully. "Yet I foresaw not the delay which has kept me from you. Sir Cecil, my dear sir, your features bear the expression of pity and kindly feeling towards Bryan; but they tell me also how you and your family have decided on his suit. In the name of one whom you respected; in the name of one, whose dying breath I have just received, reverse that decision, until you have heard all I have to tell."

"Abbé Piron?" exclaimed Bryan, with intuitive alarm; for he well knew how few persons there were whose death would so move his benefactor.

"Not the good Abbé, I hope?" cried Sir Cecil.

"He is gone to receive the reward of his virtues," resumed Mr. Harrison. "While you, Bryan, rode hither, I did but stop to look in at the chapel. He had just said mass, and was turning from the altar, as I entered. His face beamed with piety and holy joy. Ere, however, he had reached the door of the sacristy, it was suddenly

overcast by a dull expression of pain, and he fell heavily forwards on the floor."

"God receive his soul!" softly ejaculated Arabella, while she leaned her hand upon her handkerchief, and, unnoticed by the rest, signed the sign of the cross upon her throbbing bosom.

"I hastened up to him," continued Mr. Harrison: "but I soon saw that the case was hopeless. A surgeon was sent for: he opened his veins, but the blood would not flow: and, after half-an-hour of dull, lethargic insensibility, his kind and pure spirit fled to its eternal home."

All present were deeply affected. Bryan vainly strove to conceal his emotion by walking to a window. No one spoke. At length, however, Mr. Harrison broke the silence, exclaiming, in more cheerful tones,—

"But wherefore should we be cast down on account of my dear old friend and spiritual comforter? Which of us will not pray that our end may be like unto his? He had been engaged in the most holy ministration of his office. His soul must have been without conscious sin, or he could not have so officiated. With these thoughts, I consoled myself, and hastened on to prevent the evils which my delay might occasion to others who are not less dear to me. Sir Cecil, let the death of our common friend avail to my justification with you, and plead for my dear Bryan's forgiveness for what I now fear you may deem an unwarrantable trial of your feelings and of those of your daughter. If blame there be, it is mine alone. Do you forgive me?"

Sir Cecil was much moved. Excited as his feelings had been by the high-wrought and impassioned conduct of Arabella, he had heard of the sudden death of the old French priest with an emotion that subdued him. Mr. Harrison's words, "which of us would not wish that our end may be like unto his?" had startled the worldly spirit within him. A feeling of envy of the lot of the disembodied spirit of the emigrant, now restored to its true home, came over him. He had ever known the worthlessness of the world, to preserve whose good opinion he had sacrificed so much; he now forcibly felt the value of higher, of purer sources of action. He despised himself

for his weak condescension towards others whose petty objects of ambition in a moment assumed their real station in his mind. Death—death was before them all. What would his mocking conformity to public opinion, what would his secret feeling of superiority hereafter avail him? He looked round the room; and the thought came over him, with how much more assured hope and dignity, his old friend Harrison, the young peasant whom he had just spurned, and his daughter, would meet the last call, than he himself, his wife, or his selfish and arrogant son would encounter it! "And yet," he thought, "we deem ourselves superior to them; and I have sacrificed all this that she may live—like me and her mother!"

With a sudden impulse, as if afraid of the permanency of his own resolution, he rose from his seat, and walking towards Bryan, hastily took his hand, and placed it in that of his daughter.

"Take her," he said. "May your ends be like that of the poor priest. *I* have tried living for this world; *you* will follow a different plan."

O'Meara folded his arms around Arabella, who sank her head upon his bosom in a flood of irrepressible tears.

Lady Foxglove and her son started to their feet at once.

"I knew he would do it!" exclaimed her ladyship, angrily.

"Father!" cried Charles, with ill-suppressed indignation, "you will repent of this. Do not be carried away by your feelings for the death of an old French priest."

He was moving towards the lovers, perhaps with the intention of separating them, when he was arrested by the still vigorous arm of Mr. Harrison.

"My noble-minded friend!" exclaimed the latter, addressing Sir Cecil; "would that you would ever thus rely upon the first impulses of your own generous heart!"

"Generous, indeed!" said Lady Foxglove, scoffingly. "A pretty generosity, to give his only daughter to an Irish beggar!"

"Not quite a beggar, my Lady," replied Mr. Harrison, with provoking coolness. "Bryan O'Meara is my

adopted son. On him, I have settled, for want of natural heirs, whatever little I may possess."

"And a pretty exchange for one who ought to have possessed Mr. Walton's splendid property!" again scoffed Lady Foxglove, growing furious with passion, which was increased by the coolness of Mr. Harrison, and by the unmoved thoughtfulness of her husband, who, leaning his elbow upon a console, rested his head upon his hand, and gazed pensively and approvingly upon the happy emotion of the two lovers.

"Mr. Walton?" resumed Mr. Harrison, in answer to Lady Foxglove's last remark: "does your ladyship regret Mr. Walton, or his property? If the latter, it may be some comfort to you to know that he has lost the whole of the rich inheritance to which he looked forward —though he has still a pretty independence for a country gentleman. My adopted son, Bryan, has relieved him from the care of the great Irish estate which was to have been his."

"Mr. O'Meara!" exclaimed Lady Foxglove in an inquiring tone.

"*The* O'Meara, if your ladyship is inclined to give him his proper title," answered Mr. Harrison. "Although I have adopted him, I cannot ask him to relinquish such a name even to assume mine, or to forego for Willoughby his princely and ancestral woods of Westbury. So, Charles, I can give you, if you like it, a lease of my little box, until Bryan has a second son old enough to take to it and the name."

Charles Foxglove made the speaker a reserved bow, but answered not; for Sir Cecil, raising himself from his thoughtful posture, exclaimed,—

"What mean you, Harrison? Bryan has conquered me by his own merit; but let me know if there is any thing that can justify me in—no, I will no longer think of the eyes of the world!" he added, with a good-natured smile.

"It is all as I have said, Sir Cecil," resumed Mr. Harrison, cheerfully. "During what, for the sake of the *ears* of the world, we will call an excursion upon his lost ancestral estate, O'Meara recovered possession of some deeds which clearly proved that the property had never

been really forfeited, and that he, in fact, was the rightful owner of it. They were submitted to eminent counsel, learned in the law, and his claim was acknowledged to be without a flaw. Perhaps it might not have been so readily admitted by the present, or rather the late proprietor, Mr. James, had not Bryan managed to save his life for him twice. He thus considered himself under some sort of obligation to the claimant; and as he was without children; and as his next of kin was Lady Foxglove's friend, Mr. Walton, whom he cordially disliked; and as he had made that part of Ireland too hot to hold him; and, moreover, as he had a good estate in England; —for all these reasons, and perhaps being further moved thereunto by a sense of justice—for he is not an Orangeman—he at once acquiesced in the opinion of the lawyers and resigned the property to our friend Bryan O'Meara, who has very handsomely settled upon him a good annuity out of it."

"Bryan, I congratulate you," cried Sir Cecil warmly; "and," he added, "I congratulate myself as much that I gave you Arabella's hand before I knew all this."

"What a pity that Mr. O'Meara did not apply to us for it in his true character!" Lady Foxglove exclaimed, in a simpering, apologetic tone.

"Come Charles," said Clara, drawing forwards her still rather reluctant husband: "come;—you and Bryan were shaking hands when Mr. Harrison came in."

She laid his hand in that of our hero, who grasped it in a frank and friendly manner: although neither spoke.

"But how can all this be explained to the world?" Lady Foxglove said to her husband, in a half-expostulating and half-meditative tone. "What a pity it is that every one knows Mr. O'Meara's early history. Dr. Fullarton will never admit the truth."

"D—— Dr. Fullarton, and the world to boot!" cried Sir Cecil, with cheerful petulance. "Bella has set them all at defiance; and what is the consequence?—she has conformed to a religion which, we all know, has more to say for itself than any other; and she has secured the affections of a handsome young fellow, who has now a large property, as well as education, manners, and family

to distinguish him. His early history, forsooth! If we had not known his early history, Charles would not have been alive to dance at his wedding. D—— the world, and come to luncheon! Bella, my love, you have made me happier than I ever thought to be again."

He twined his arm round his daughter's waist, and led her into the adjoining room. After a moment's hesitation, Lady Foxglove sidled up to O'Meara, and smiling benignly and saying, "Bryan, you do not offer me your arm," passed her hand within it, and led him away after Sir Cecil and Arabella, the while she addressed to him unmeaning nothings about the weather. Clara and Mr. Harrison shook hands with joyful and sympathizing cordiality, and silently followed the others arm-in-arm. Charles remained alone, leaning against the mantel-shelf. For a few moments, he beat the devil's tattoo with his toe on the rug; then turned; looked into the mirror; pulled out his shirt-frill and ruffles: and, then, whistling a few bars of a popular tune, sauntered after the others. Arrived at the luncheon table, he poured out a full goblet of wine; nodded his head good-naturedly to Bryan, as much as to say, "Your health," tossed it off; seized a carving-knife and fork; and attacking a cold joint of meat, cried,—

"Who shall I help? Will any one have any of this? For my part, I am confoundedly hungry!"

All was again friendliness and harmony, and the business of life went on.

* * * * *

Need we recount any more? need we describe the festivities of the wedding? need we foretell the patriotic life of The O'Meara and Arabella at Westbury? and the years of exemplary and voluntary poverty which, according to the plan which he had announced, Mr. Harrison spent in a cottage of Lea Dale? need we recount the future life of the intelligent young convert, Emma Beauchamp; or of our dear friend, the early and most excellent heroine of this novel—Bridget O'Meara? Their simple history is, indeed, chronicled:—chronicled by one, who, like the lowly widow whose character he delighted to portray, lived, in time, for eternity. But we have

extracted enough to store the memory of every reader with pious thoughts, with truthful aspirations, with zeal for the glory of God, for the freedom of mankind, for the charities of life, for the welfare of the poor. The author of the compilation from which we have strung these pages together, sought no other object.

Botleigh Grange, 1845.

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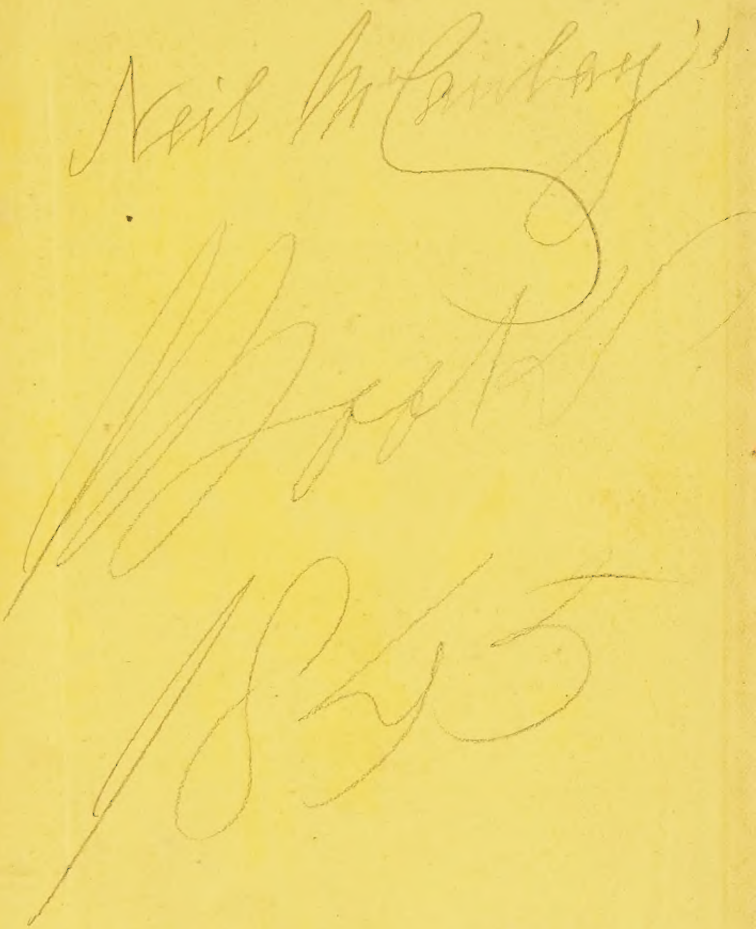
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